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The Shape of Things

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GOVERNOR EARLE, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, has written a letter to *The Nation,* in response to our editorial last week, in which he gives at length his reasons for supporting the state Board of Censors in its refusal to allow the film "Spain in Flames" to be shown in Pennsylvania. We have not yet received the complete text of Governor Earle's letter. As soon as we do we shall comment on it—probably in the next issue. Meanwhile we learn that he has ordered fifty tickets for a private showing of the film. We await developments.

*

WITHIN THE LAST FEW WEEKS, AT LEAST SIX crimes involving rape and murder have been committed and flamboyantly reported in the press. The latest was the killing in New York of an artists' model and her mother and a roomer in their apartment. The older of the two women had been attacked before being strangled. In each case the combination of sex and murder with the other morbid and horrifying details that emerge from such crimes has insured a maximum of lurid headlines, pictures, lavish news spreads. We have had the usual crop of editorial demands for summary action, attacks upon the parole system, and clamor for new forms of punishment. But only one recent writer as far as we know has hit the mark squarely. That writer is Heywood Broun, who questioned in the New York *World-Telegram* whether the lurid talents displayed by his colleagues, the headline writers and crime reporters, may not have helped to spread the infection. It is a known fact that crimes come in "waves." It would be interesting to know how much these epidemics are stimulated by stories which advertise the horrid thrills accompanying the more violent and abnormal varieties of crime. We recommend—without much hope—a little restraint within the newspaper offices, even at the expense of newsstand sales.

*

WHAT HAS AMBASSADOR CLAUDE BOWERS been doing all this time in his retreat at Hendaye? This question comes to our mind in connection with Secretary Hull's plea last week for an increase in the State Department's budget. No doubt Secretary Hull was entirely right in stressing—we quote the Associated Press—that "it was vital to have able representatives, especi-

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ally in the disturbed portions of the world," and that "it was important for American foreign representatives to discover what was going on behind the scenes and foresee trouble." Which leads us to ask again: What has Ambassador Bowers been doing all this time? Why is he not in Valencia, the seat of the legal Spanish government, where he would be in a position to send intelligent reports back to his government, and protect American life and property? Why does he leave a young Third Secretary in charge of affairs in the part of the world where the most momentous events are happening today? We are certain the answer does not lie in the views of Mr. Bowers himself. Mr. Bowers cares so much about democracy that even from Spain he sends an interview to *Esquire* saying that the Founding Fathers feared to admit "real democracy" into the American Constitution. The hopes for real democracy in Spain center today in Valencia. Can it be the State Department which believes that to have an American ambassador at Valencia, where he belongs, might be construed as favoring the Loyalist Spanish government? If so, it is another instance of the timorousness which keeps the State Department from observing even the traditional legalities of international relations.

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WHEN THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT FINDS IT necessary to adopt as drastic a measure as seizing the property of farmers who do not meet their production quotas, the food situation is serious indeed. The German peasant does not relish compulsion any more than any other farmer. And under normal circumstances peasants anywhere will produce as much as possible in order to obtain the necessities of life. Resort to compulsion by the government would seem to verify the reports that the peasants were deliberately refusing to deliver food at the ruinous prices offered them. It remains to be seen whether the peasants do not have the whip hand. The threat to take over the land and rent it out to peasants who are more loyal to Nazi economics may prove temporarily effective. But there is a difference between meeting the legal requirements and the intelligent use of agricultural resources necessary in a modern state. No government can get a full measure of production out of any sector of its population by coercive measures.

✶

LAST WEEK THE DRAMA CRITICS' CIRCLE awarded its second annual prize for the best new American play of the year to "High Tor," by Maxwell Anderson, whose "Winterset" was chosen last year. On the last ballot "High Tor" received the votes of fourteen of the eighteen critics present. It is an imaginative comedy dealing with a young hermit living on a cliff overlooking the Hudson who has held out against the agents of an industrial company wanting to buy his land but who finally concludes, after conversing with the shades of Hendrik Hudson's men, that it is useless to resist the spirit of the age. Many will agree that the play is less powerful than "Winterset," but it is very agreeably worked out in a spirit suggestive of the later Shakespearean comedies. Three votes went to "Johnny Johnson," a satiric tragicomedy dealing with the adventures of a "fool of God" during the last war and set to music by Kurt Weil. It was generally thought interesting in conception but not completely realized. A lone vote was cast for "Daughters of Atreus," a remarkable retelling in classical terms of the Iphigenia story. The popularity of "High Tor" may be taken as something of a portent in the history of contemporary taste.

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THE NEW INDIAN CONSTITUTION HAS STRUCK an obstacle in the refusal of Indian National Congress leaders to form governments in the six provinces in which their party holds a majority of seats in the legislatures. The issue is a fundamental one. Speaking for the Congress leaders, Gandhi asked for a definite promise from the provincial governors that the "special powers" granted them by the constitution would not be invoked to weaken the authority of the elected government. The governors have taken the position that the granting of such an assurance would be against the spirit and intent of the constitution. In this they are probably correct, since the constitution seems to have been carefully framed to give the Indian people the illusion of self-government without the substance. At first it was thought the Congress Party would boycott the elections, in which case Britain's task would have been comparatively easy. But after taking part in the elections and getting a majority in six out of the eleven "self-governing" provinces, the party is now in a position to checkmate British plans. The energetic and wise leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru has at last put the Congress Party in a position where it can demand real concessions from the British government.

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WE LEND OUR SUPPORT TO SENATOR NYE in his pending resolution which calls upon the State Department to give an official opinion on whether Germany and Italy are at war with Spain. When a well-equipped army of 40,000 men crosses the frontier into a neighboring country and attacks its capital, there is at least reason for us to ask whether or not the countries are at war. In theory, the Neutrality Act is supposed to apply to both sides in an international conflict. To apply it to one side only, and to continue sending munitions to the other side, is both unjust and dangerous. The suggestion, which apparently emanated from official circles, that "volunteers" from many countries are fighting in Spain and that it might be difficult to establish their official connections has no basis in fact. Officers of the Italian regular army have been captured by Spanish government troops. Italian and German passport and currency regulations make it impossible for any considerable number of individuals to leave either of the fascist countries without official knowledge and assistance. We do not happen to share Senator Nye's faith in an isolationist neutrality as a means of keeping us out of war. But it is

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important to prevent a measure designed to maintain peace from becoming a screen behind which the United States is covertly aiding the fascist powers.

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THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON EUROPEAN cooperatives, which has just made its report, did not find the European cooperative movement to be a short cut to Utopia. But it did find a well-established, efficient method of distribution which returned a substantial saving to its members. It also found that the cooperatives were carrying on social and educational activities of profound importance. Nowhere was there any evidence that the cooperatives were supplanting private enterprise. On the contrary, competition between the two was found to be mutually beneficial. Members of the commission differed sharply regarding the future of the movement in this country. Some felt that the efficiency of American merchandising methods, the lack of a strong labor movement, and the absence of a desire for thrift made it unlikely that consumers' cooperatives would ever gain a foothold in the United States. Others felt that the cooperative method offered hope of saving "the American idea" against the threat of "powerful forces in a rapidly changing world." Rejecting both of these views as extreme, the majority of the commission agreed that the movement had a real contribution to make in this country although perhaps not as great a one as it already has made in the more favorable atmosphere of Europe. With this view we should be inclined to agree.

*

THE DUPLESSIS GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC has revealed its essentially fascist character by pushing through one of the most repressive measures ever adopted on the North American continent. With a view to stamping out the "Communist menace," a law has been enacted providing for the padlocking of any house or building used for the dissemination of "Communist propaganda" and prohibiting the sale or circulation of all newspapers, periodicals, pamphlets, and other documents "propagating or tending to propagate communism." Under the new law it will be illegal for a resident of Quebec to discuss communism in his own home. While the act contains extended definitions of a "house," a "person," and an "owner," there is no attempt at a definition of "communism" or "bolshevism." Mr. Duplessis did not clarify the terms when in the debate he spoke vaguely of the "movements with anarchistic tendencies" which had found their way into the province after creating much "disorder and misery." The truth is that Quebec has neither a Communist nor an Anarchist movement worthy of a moment's consideration. Even the C. C. F., Canada's semi-socialistic party, has never been able to gain a foothold in the province. What progressive opposition there is has come from isolated labor groups which are without real political strength. Mr. Duplessis is no doubt aiming to smash these groups. Someone should tell him that even milder attempts in America have proved to be boomerangs.

Is the Supreme Court Going Liberal?

TOO MANY the decisions which the Supreme Court handed down last Monday will be proof that the court has gone liberal. The court upheld by unanimous opinions two fairly important New Deal measures —the Railway Labor Act and the new Frazier-Lemke Farm Mortgage Moratorium Act. In the field of state powers it upheld by a seven-to-two decision a Washington state tax on materials used in the construction of the Grand Coulee dam; by a five-to-four decision, the Virginia state milk-control law; above all, by a similar vote, the Washington state minimum-wage law.

We do not want to be ungracious and eternally dissatisfied. We rejoice with the railroad workers, farmers, women laundry workers, and scrubwomen who are affected by these decisions. We welcome the change of mind by Justice Roberts which transformed a liberal minority of four in the Tipaldo case (New York minimum-wage law) into a majority of five in the present case of the West Coast Hotel Company *vs.* Parrish. Nevertheless, no clear mind today will be lulled into optimism because some needed legislation has finally been validated, or because a "bad" judge seems to have become a "good" judge. The real issues are more momentous—the fate of the President's court proposal, the fate of a constitutional amendment, the fate, in short, of judicial supremacy.

Two things stand out as one seeks to view the decisions in some perspective. One is the sense of having read Chief Justice Hughes's opinion in the minimum-wage case somewhere before—until one realizes that its tone is the tone of the liberal decisions in the first stage of the New Deal, the tone of the Appalachian coals case, the Nebbia milk-control case, the Minnesota moratorium case. In all of them there is a judicial tolerance of legislative judgment and a sense of economic realities. The second thing is the bitterness of Justice Sutherland's dissent in the minimum-wage case, and the rancor of his obvious reference to Justice Stone's remarks in his AAA dissent as having "offended the proprieties" and being "ill-considered and mischievous." When the veneer that coats the surface of Supreme Court intercourse wears as thin as that, one may feel assured that it has been subjected to some rough handling. Even more important, however, than Justice Sutherland's personal allusions is the flat and uncompromising quality of the short treatise on constitutional interpretation with which he prefaces his discussion of the Washington minimum-wage law. Here one may find, as explicitly as anywhere in the annals of the court, what we might call the Hussite view of inflexible constitutional construction. "Burn me if you will: I can do no other." There is a grim sort of courage in this dissent of Sutherland's, the courage of the diehard tory in a bewildering world of economic change.

Thus it would seem that the issue is now drawn in the court between the new liberal majority of five and the

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tory minority of four. But here we must enter so many *caveats* and make so many qualifications as to leave this view finally untenable. First, nothing crucial has been decided on the federal power. The two unanimous opinions dealing with federal powers prove nothing but a hope that they may be a prelude to something more important. The railroads come so clearly within the scope of the commerce power that the only fact which is striking about Justice Stone's opinion is that the rest of the court followed him in upholding the provisions even for "backshop" employees. As for the Frazier-Lemke Act, the redrafting sought laboriously to meet the court's objections in its decision of two years ago.

Even in the realm of state power we must keep our fingers crossed. The liberal margin of advantage is the margin of Justice Roberts's very changeable mind. That is not a sturdy enough peg on which to hang the garment of one's hopes. The issue involved, moreover, is one in which the court had previously created a no man's land where neither the federal nor the state governments could act; and since public opinion, like nature, abhors a vacuum, a storm of protest over the Tipaldo decision had swept the country and included even Alfred Landon and Hamilton Fish. What the new decision proves is that Justice Roberts is responsive to such considerations, and that Justice Hughes in the present agony of the judicial power has not stopped short of deliberately overruling the precedent of the Adkins case.

Thus we must conclude that the real lessons of Monday's decisions are two. We find, first of all, that our economic fate and our judicial fortunes are still subject to the caprice of the odd man on the court. We find, secondly, that whatever we may say or think of judicial independence, the Supreme Court does actually in its functioning operate within the ambit of political considerations. Such a day of decisions would not have been possible before the court faced the threat of the President's reorganization proposal. Its new liberalism, like the new-found fidelity of the frightened bridegroom, may without disrespect be called a shotgun liberalism.

The logic of the history of the Hughes court is to be found, however, not in the psychological realm but in the crises of the economic order. Three stages may be traced. In the first, that of the economic crisis of Hoover's closing and Roosevelt's opening years, the court was caught up in the general sense of fear, and its decisions were flexible. As the Roosevelt government undertook more and more stringent industrial controls and as the economic crisis lessened, the second stage became a crisis of Congressional control: and here the court majority set its face rigorously against any untoward controls that might disturb the vested interests. Out of reaction against this stand the movement to liberalize both the court and the Constitution has grown up—a movement whose first fruits have been the President's proposal. Thus the third stage is the crisis of the judicial supremacy. And in this crisis the two balance-of-power justices, Hughes and Roberts, are turning toward liberalism.

Whether it is a true liberalism, the coming Wagner Act decisions will tell.

The Sitdown Hysteria

THE sitdown has reached the point where people no longer reason about it: they can only give spluttering expression to their hopes and terrors. Witness the newspaper campaign against it. Witness the hysteria of the utterances from the pulpit and in the microphone. Witness the flat assertions and denials of the sitdown's legality, made in most cases without fear or research. Witness, as a sort of symbol of the whole tumult, the telegram sent to Vice-President Garner by a group of Boston citizens headed by ex-President Lowell of Harvard, calling the sitdown "armed insurrection . . . anarchy, mob rule, and ruthless dictatorship."

Hitler's aphorism, "We think with our blood," seems on the point of receiving dangerous confirmation. The abdication of reason is nothing new in American life. We have seen it happen in time of war and during very crucial Presidential elections. But when reason abdicates so completely because American labor has gone about its organizing task—that must be seen as an index of the rapidly mounting psychological tensions within the nervous system of the capitalist democratic state.

How shall we confront the sitdown hysteria? Much of it has undoubtedly been drummed up by the newspapers and their industrial allies. But we must not forget that there must have been some fears there in the American mind which could be drummed up. For the most violent and lawless people in the world, Americans cling amazingly to their "law and order" myth. We live in a complicated and fragile civilization, where it is conceivable that a violent wrench might send the whole structure toppling. Many of us have the feeling that what separates us from anarchy is principally the accumulated crust of convention, otherwise known as "law." Like the Britisher in the jungle who clings desperately to the amenities of London life, we are jealous of any infraction of law—especially of property law, which is the fabric of a capitalist order. If we yield an inch we surrender all. It is only in these terms that we can understand the hysteria of Mr. Lowell and his comrades.

This is the psychological core. The rest is technique and self-hypnosis. As such, let us not underestimate its force. It has been strong enough to put even progressive Congressmen on the defensive. It has been strong enough to worry Mr. Roosevelt. It has been strong enough finally to force Mr. Lewis into ordering the withdrawal of the automobile workers from the Chrysler plants.

We believe Mr. Lewis was wise and statesman-like in his action. He has in many instances shown his sensitiveness to the worker's mind. But here is proof of his sensitiveness to the middle-class mind as well, ridden by property fears as it is. It is another instance also of the restraint which the whole C. I. O. movement has thus far shown. But restraint or no restraint, it is not a hard guess that the newspapers and industrialists will continue their crusade of hysteria. Their success thus far should do much to dampen the premature rejoicings of liberals after the Roosevelt reelection, when it was said on all

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sides that the press was no longer a decisive force in our culture. Where labor and the lower middle class can hold together, as on the Roosevelt campaign issue and, to an extent, on the Supreme Court issue, the advantage of the press can be overcome. But where an issue arises on which labor and the middle class can be split, then trust to the press to seek a way of splitting them.

What makes the press so anxious? We come here to the sitdown not as *symbol of fear* but as *social reality*. The sitdown as a strike technique has, of course, enormous advantages that have several times been described in *The Nation*. But its great strength lies in the fact that it is part of a complex, which can be roughly summarized as the C. I. O., John L. Lewis, and the sitdown—in short, a new movement, a new leader, a new technique. It is this combination that is bringing accessions to the ranks of organized labor so fast that the resources of the C. I. O. can scarcely keep pace with them. It is this complex that the newspapers and the industrialists fear and are fighting: they merely single out what seems to them the most vulnerable part of it, the sitdown.

We believe that the American people will come to accept the sitdown, with limitations, as a legitimate technique, just as we expressed our belief last week that American law would eventually sanction it. But whether or not it continues as a technique is not of transcending importance. What is important is the proof that the new American labor movement is alert enough to reach out for new techniques and wise enough to weigh gravely their social utility.

Mussolini Weighs His Chances

WIDE difference of opinion exists as to whether Mussolini has promised not to send more volunteers into Spain. The dispatches contradict one another. Part of the difficulty arises from the fact that if Mussolini told London and Paris he would continue to break the non-intervention agreement, they would like to keep it a secret as long as possible, whereas if he undertook to refrain from further shipments he would like to keep it a secret as long as possible. For the realist, however, the question is not what Mussolini promises, for he has many times broken his promises. The question is what he will do.

It is highly probable that Mussolini sent into Spain 60,000 or more Italian soldiers in advance of the date on which the foreign patrol of Spain was to become effective, in complete certainty that this large force, cooperating with Germans and Moors, would quickly carry Franco to victory. This certainty broke down when the Italians turned and ran on the Guadalajara front. The rout was an embarrassment to Mussolini abroad and will plague him at home. The news of 2,000 or 3,000 dead and as many prisoners must trickle through to Italian towns and hamlets and cause the people to murmur. Yet there is no doubt that Mussolini's domestic situation would still allow him to dispatch more men to Spain.

But will 50,000 or 100,000 more and even better Italian soldiers secure a Fascist triumph in Spain? Mussolini is hard-boiled and this is the great problem now tormenting him. Every month the Loyalist army improves. Spain might become a bottomless maw swallowing division after division of Italian soldiers. Even Mussolini's possibilities and temper have limits. The Guadalajara battle yielded enough Italian equipment for several government brigades, and there is no guaranty that ensuing battles will not again restock Valencia's supply depots. The Spanish government has won supremacy in the air. Its tanks, too, have become a tremendous fighting factor, and now the Loyalist fleet, long bottled up in Cartagena, has sallied forth to harass the enemy.

There is no longer any way by which Mussolini can produce a speedy victory for himself in Spain. Can he, before Abyssinia is completely subdued and before it has yielded him any of the expected profits, take on a war for a year or more in Spain? Here international complications enter the picture. Italy's 60,000 or more soldiers sufficed to bring the French Radical Socialists into line and enabled the Blum Ministry to take a firm stand against the Italian invasion. Nobody knows at what point the British will stop wavering. Will it be when Mussolini has 150,000 or 200,000 troops in Spain? The Duce must reckon with the probability that the deeper he sinks into Spain the more foreign resistance he will meet.

Finally, it appears that Mussolini is not quite as sure as he would like to be of Germany. The New York newspapers, the *Times* even more noticeably than the *Herald Tribune*, are reporting the involved international situation with woeful inadequacy. But it seems that Hitler sent 20,000 troops and then stopped. The Nazi dailies did not suppress stories of the Guadalajara débâcle, and that, in a totalitarian state, has significance. Germany and Italy are both close enough to Spain to send by air 500 airplanes, which would make a vast difference and might turn the tide. Yet Germany has lately been less interested. Is this because of a tacit understanding that when England succeeds in pushing Mussolini out, Germany will share some of Franco's concessions? Perhaps. But these speculations become increasingly less impressive. England is caught in this contradiction: without the Italians Franco certainly cannot win, and with the Italians England will not be stage manager.

Has Hitler despaired of a Fascist victory in Spain? Will Mussolini give up the attempt now? The stakes in this Spanish struggle are very large, and the decision is probably one of the weightiest that Mussolini has ever been called upon to make. The Fascists cannot readily admit failure in Spain. On the other hand, Hitler and Mussolini, though they may behave like "mad men" when the occasion requires, are calculating. Hitler especially has his army chiefs to reckon with. In this crisis of uncertainty, just a bit more certainty in London and Paris could quickly decide Mussolini that he had had enough of Spain. What a difference it would make in Europe! And still the democracies muddle.

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WASHINGTON WEEKLY

BY PAUL W. WARD

Laws to Throttle Labor

Washington, March 27

DON'T waste much time worrying over reports and rumors that Congress, in response to the current, intensive campaign of employer associations, is going to enact some labor-throttling legislation such as acts requiring incorporation of unions or outlawing sitdown strikes. Look, instead, to the state legislatures. That's where the dirty work will be done and already is being attempted. A case in point is the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Act, which Donald Richberg recently drafted for the benefit of anti-union employers in that state and now, Max Stern writes in the Scripps-Howard papers, is urging, as one of Roosevelt's close advisers, as a pattern for new federal legislation.

There are several reasons why no legislation directly inimical to organized labor is likely to come out of Congress. In the first place, the Supreme Court, when it rules on the Wagner Act tomorrow or a week or so hence, probably will knock the props out from under any plans that might be in the offing for extension of federal jurisdiction over labor relations; that certainly will be true if it holds the NLRB has no jurisdiction over manufacturing enterprises. Second, and more important, here in Washington organized labor can bring to bear against anti-labor legislation a concentrated and effective opposition made immeasurably stronger by the fact that there are federal officials, members of Congress, and journalists here who have a thorough grasp of the subject and can illuminate all the nefarious purposes lying behind the weasel words that embroider such legislation. In the third place, Roosevelt is at the moment wholly preoccupied with getting his court-reform bill through Congress and cannot afford to alienate labor support.

However, when the Supreme Court path to an extension of federal jurisdiction in the labor field is cleared, we may expect that efforts will be made in Congress to set up for all industries substantially the same machinery for peaceful adjustment of labor disputes as exists for disputes in the railroad industry. There is no good reason why such legislation should be resisted if it is firmly rooted in the Wagner Act and directed primarily at protecting labor's rights rather than at prevention of strikes and other industrial stoppages. But all proposals for extending the railway mediation set-up to labor relations in general will have to be subjected to a rigorous curry-combing by experts in search of those tricky phrases which labor's foes will seek to insert.

An example of this sort of thing is the Maritime Mediation bill which one of the Roosevelt field marshals, Senator Guffey of Pennsylvania, has introduced in Congress. There are only a few important labor bills in Congress that have a chance of enactment, and among them the Guffey bill is unquestionably the worst. Its quality is exemplified in a new concept it introduces in collective bargaining through a provision requiring that employee representatives in the maritime trades must be native-born or fully naturalized citizens. The Senator, or whatever group of ship-line attorneys framed the bill for him, would have saved words and misunderstandings if he had, instead, written into the bill a proviso saying that "under no conditions shall Harry Bridges, guiding spirit of the new maritime labor movement on the West Coast, be permitted to represent the workers." Merely a skeletonized enumeration of all the flaws and pitfalls in the Guffey bill would fill several pages. It rejects all the good features of the Railway Mediation Act, adopts all its worst features, and then intensifies them. Its emphasis is on stopping strikes at any cost. It provides for compulsory mediation and then delivers the whole problem of labor relations into the hands of courts, juries, and district attorneys, instead of turning it over to some such group of experts as the NLRB, which under the bill would be deprived of jurisdiction over the maritime industry. The adjustment board that the Guffey bill would create would be loaded against labor with twenty employer representatives against sixteen labor representatives. Virtually every union-busting dodge that lawyers have been able to contrive has been built into Guffey's bill and hidden there under blankets of language which give the whole measure an air of complete reasonableness and liberality.

Fortunately, there are men in Washington able to lay bare such traps for labor and put the unions on guard. But this is less true in the state capitals. For example, there is pending in the Wisconsin legislature a bill much like the Wagner Act, and employer groups are ganging up to fill it with weasel words. According to reports in labor circles, Governor La Follette has succumbed to their sweet reasonableness to such a point that he is backing some of their amendments, including one which provides the entering wedge for compulsory incorporation of unions under the guise of requiring registration for the purpose of eliminating company unions, which the law already outlaws. There are baby Wagner acts pending in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey—and others in the drafting process in California and Ohio—that will have to be guarded meticulously against such encumbrances and worse ones that corporation lawyers will try to insert in them. It can be done. The Utah legislature a few days ago adopted a state Wagner Act that follows the federal measure almost word for word and in some of its provisions is even more specific; Utah is

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the first state to enact a law complementing the National Labor Relations Act. There is an atrocious bill pending in Minnesota, introduced by State Senator Galvin apparently for the purpose of heading off a measure such as Utah puts into effect on July 1. Also pending in state legislatures are numerous bills to outlaw sitdown strikes, require unions to incorporate, force them to file annual reports covering their activities, finances, and membership lists. Such measures, however, do not appear to be making much headway. Union-incorporation bills have just been licked in Missouri and Oregon.

Pennsylvania probably will be the first state to follow Utah's example in the enactment of a law paralleling the National Labor Relations Act. The bill which Richberg drafted for that purpose on behalf of employers in the state has been thoroughly emasculated by henchmen of the Earle administration, including Lieutenant Governor Tom Kennedy, secretary-treasurer of the United Mine Workers, who enlisted the aid of federal experts in disemboweling Richberg's scheme. What is left is only a polite little bill that says the state Mediation Service should do its best to see that labor disputes are settled by peaceful negotiation. The way remains clear for a state Wagner Act. Richberg's bill was intended to take the place of such an act. In essence, it was nothing more than the National Association of Manufacturers' compulsory-mediation proposal incorporating all the mediation devices of the railway act. But this bill, which is now being held up as a model for federal legislation to preserve the industrial peace, contained none of the Railway Labor Act's provisions outlawing company unions, establishing majority rule, and prohibiting employers from having any part or voice in questions concerning the workers' rights to self-organization.

Liberty and Death in Puerto Rico

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

[Mr. Villard's Issues and Men has been omitted this week in order to make room for the first of two articles on conditions in Puerto Rico. The second will appear next week.]

THE needless bloodshed in Ponce, Puerto Rico, due in part to official blundering, which has just cost ten lives, again forces to the front the question of the independence of that island. I was told by officials before I left New York, and again on my arrival in San Juan, that the independence movement was negligible, being confined to a few reckless hotheads, and that the Nationalist Party has an enrolment of only 5,000, made up largely of boys of fifteen and sixteen. Since the riot, newspaper comment in this country echoes the statement that there is no real Nationalist movement. Senator Barcelo, president of the Liberal Party, now in New York City, repeated this in an interview after the riots. Yet after my visit to the island I feel that independence is and will remain the foremost issue in Puerto Rico, and this without any regard whatever for the Nationalist Party, its scanty numbers and the immaturity of its members. The Nationalist agitation is in the air and will continue to be so because independence for Puerto Rico is synonymous with economic freedom and security. Talk of it would largely cease if Puerto Rico could obtain justice at the hands of the United States; if its lands were turned back to the people on fair and just terms; if the stranglehold of foreign capitalists upon the island could be broken; and if there were some assurance of decent living conditions for the mass of the peons, who today, working in the cane fields, earn the starvation wage of $105 a year.

Statements of conditions in the island have been published, republished, broadcast, and trumpeted about for decades without moving the Congress or the Presidents of the United States to do anything radical. It is a bitter fact that although in 1898 we promised the island the "American standard of life," no thorough reorganization plan was ever undertaken until our own sufferings in the depression compelled our government to act for Puerto Rico as for every other part of the Union. Governor Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., told the truth about the horrible conditions when he was there, but it was only the New Deal—which he denounced—that accepted the challenge. Under the direction of the Department of the Interior a comprehensive relief and reconstruction program is under way.

It is not enough. Nor can it move swiftly enough to end the despair which comes to thoughtful minds when they study the problem. Many, many Puerto Ricans are thinking seriously and talking quietly, without public agitation, about independence—continental Americans living on the island, too—because they say that the present situation cannot continue, that it is getting worse, despite the Puerto Rican Relief Administration's work. These people do not hate the United States. They are not actuated by a theoretical belief in what Woodrow Wilson defined as the right of small nations and peoples everywhere to their own way of life. They know the risks of independence, the dangers from unscrupulous, self-seeking politicians of the Latin American variety; they know that if the island leaves the United States and is excluded from the American tariff system it will face economic ruin. Yet their minds turn constantly to independence because they see no hope for Puerto Rico as long as it is a dependency, ruled imperialistically by a Congress which will never be able to understand the

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Latin American point of view, temperament, or cultural aspirations. They say, "We are not Anglo-Saxons but Latins, and the two will never mix; the Congress will never be able to govern us justly."

They gladly acknowledge that Puerto Rico has profited in many respects from American rule. They have good roads; 48 per cent of the budget goes to education (and that is still not enough); the railroads are much improved; the health of the people, shocking as the statistics reveal it to be, is yet better than it was under the Spaniards. Medical centers are being established all over the island; the university has developed remarkably; San Juan has been beautified, modernized, and given excellent docks; all the cities are much cleaner. But still the fundamental conditions which have reduced the Puerto Ricans to economic slavery are worse than when the Spaniards left the island, for the lands of the small farmers are steadily being lost, and the vast sugar profits leave the island to be spent by absentee shareholders in Spain and the United States. Four American sugar corporations own almost half the sugar lands and produce almost half the sugar crop. In the seventeen years from 1917 to 1935, the net earnings of the three largest absentee-owned sugar companies totaled $79,275,000, and "practically all these net returns," the Puerto Rican Reconstruction Administration reports, were paid to stockholders living off the island. The four chief products—sugar, tobacco, fruits, and textile goods—have shown an enormous increase in total value and per capita output under American rule; and still the plight of the island is desperate. A vital reason for this is that the population has increased since the conquest by 900,000 at least, and the cost of living, except for some foods, is as high as or higher than in New York.

There you have the reasons for the independence movement, the reasons why it will continue and grow, whether the growth shows in the figures of the Nationalist Party and public agitation or not. Of course, the propertied interests are opposed to independence, as are also many persons with a liberal point of view. I asked a high official of an important farmers' cooperative association which seeks to aid the small planters as against the banks and the great corporations what independence would do to the sugar industry. "Kill it," he replied. There is a genuine and not unfounded fear that independence would bring forth a dictator, like Trujillo in neighboring Santo Domingo, or mob rule, immediate expropriation of property, and chaos. It is a curious anomaly that while economic insecurity is creating a real demand for freedom, the assurance of economic security would also increase the desire for independence, and in conservative circles. I asked one of the richest men in the sugar industry whether the assurance that his property and income would be untouched under a republican government would make a difference in his attitude toward independence. To my great surprise he replied, "Indeed it would. I should feel very differently about it." Others whose minds are attuned to the social needs of the island, who cannot ride unmoved by those horrible pigsty slums to be seen in every city, in which human beings live in sickening poverty and degradation, say that under a republic things could not be worse and might be much better. "At any rate," they add, "chaos is coming if we go on this way."

When I asked what made them believe the island could exist during a transition period from colony to republic, I got no specific answers. I inquired whether steps were being taken to plan for independence; whether they were working out a simple system of government—the island has, for one thing, far too many municipalities; whether they were considering a return to the unicameral legislative system abandoned in 1917; how they were proposing to minimize the politician evil; whether they were considering proportional representation, and so on. There is little such spade work being done. Those who favor independence are palsied by uncertainty about the economic policy of the United States after liberation. They try to persuade themselves that Puerto Rico is too valuable a market—$80,000,000 a year—for Congress to throw away. In other words, they do not know the swinish selfishness of our beet-sugar and cane-sugar growers and high-tariff lobbyists who dictate the policy of our government in such matters. Still the reply came to me: "Even so, we can't go on this way."

Statehood? The immediate offer of it would certainly spike the independence movement. But its irrevocability would daunt many. What if after the union the incompatibility of the two temperaments became more manifest? The pending threat to give school instruction in English has aroused a storm. The Puerto Ricans think, mistakenly, that this means a deliberate effort to do away with Spanish, an attempt to wean their children away from their great Spanish heritage; today, after nearly forty years of Americanization, the Puerto Ricans, as the Baltimore *Evening Sun* puts it, "are avoiding English to the extent possible." Would not the island be Americanized more than ever if it became a state, and would two Senators and a few Congressmen really be able to win for them the economic safety and liberty they need in order to live with human decency?

Well may they ask this question, for the coastwise shipping laws—from which the Virgin Islands, seventy miles away, are exempted—work against Puerto Rico, and so do monopolistic freight rates. The island is also severely penalized by our tariff laws. Reporting to the P. R. E. R. A., Darwin De Golia declares that the value of mainland products brought to the island in fiscal 1934 was $57,503,000, on which the potential tariffs, or increased price paid by Puerto Rico because of the tariff, was $22,951,000. Of this total, $19,275,000 was in foodstuffs on which the cost added by the tariff was $10,107,560, a heavy burden, indeed, for a starving people. Again, Puerto Rico is ruthlessly exploited by mainland firms, as if to make industrialization of the island impossible. Often when a successful factory is started, it is deliberately undersold by some mainland competitor. It is hardly surprising that the Puerto Ricans point to this and say: "Well, independence would remedy *that* and let us create home industries."

Four great remedies for these economic ills present

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themselves: industrialization, birth control, wholesale emigration, and the recapture of their lands for the people. These I shall discuss in detail in my next article. I wish here to stress again how basic are the evils of the economic situation. If the island is not freed from its economic royalists; if the price of living continues to rise —the P. R. E. R. A. said on May 2, 1936, that measured in terms of purchasing power "wages have been reduced almost consistently since the first days of American occupation"—the Puerto Ricans will welcome a king, a dictator, independence—anything but the present regime.

As for the few hotheads, the Nationalists, who call themselves the "army of liberation," and possibly began the Ponce bloodshed, they are extraordinarily difficult to handle. They illegally possess arms, they insist on carrying them publicly, and they are ready to shoot. They had not received permission to parade at Ponce with arms. Nothing can prevent further violence and additional "martyrs to freedom" except the utmost skill and tact, and these the officials have not shown. The only sound policy is to let the hotheads have full rein so far as possible, but your official mind hurries to forbid parades lest they bring on disorder—and thereby brings on bloodshed. I am much afraid of the military mind in the palace at San Juan, for that type turns inevitably to repression and severity. The Governor, General Winship, who stands very high in the island, is a charming and well-meaning gentleman, most eager to do what is right. Like everyone else he was deeply shocked by the assassination of Colonel Riggs, the chief of police, a year ago. The universal horror and indignation over the Colonel's murder were unfortunately tempered by the immediate killing of the two assassins by policemen at the station house to which they were taken, on the excuse that they had made a rush to take arms from a rack. The public believes these youths were deliberately murdered, partly out of grief and rage, partly because insular juries are so slow to convict. The policemen were tried before a native jury and acquitted. Their retention on the force without disciplinary proceedings by the police authorities is an outrage. No efficient policeman turns red-handed murderers loose without handcuffs in a room with a rack of allegedly loaded rifles. What competent policeman would not have been able to subdue two boys under such circumstances without shooting them? And if it is true, as charged, that these same policemen are now on duty in the immediate proximity of the governor's palace, then that is tantamount to commendation and not condemnation. It is again proof that military and police methods do not mix. What is needed now is a General Glassford and his technique in handling the bonus army.

It all makes one feel that there are bad days ahead in Puerto Rico, despite all the honest efforts in Washington to improve conditions. When Patrick Henry called for liberty or death he meant the political brand of liberty. Multitudes in Puerto Rico today believe that death is ahead of them if economic liberty is denied them, and therefore they ask a political independence which in their hearts they do not wholly desire, as a last resort in order to achieve economic well-being. Personally I should look upon the experiment of independence with the greatest anxiety. But believing always in self-government, I feel that if a majority of the Puerto Ricans want it, they should have it.

Volcano Under England

BY ROBERT DELL

Newbury, England, March 16

I HAVE been in England for three weeks, and there seems to me to have been a certain amount of change in the moral atmosphere since my last visit six months ago. To begin with, everybody assures me that there is less pro-German feeling than there was last year. And so far as I can judge from an experience necessarily limited, that would appear to be the case. Whether there is less anti-French feeling is another matter. Anti-French feeling seems to me to be permanent in England, although it is more or less at the surface at different times. What the reason of it is, it is difficult to say. One is inclined to think that it is to some extent a relic of the old nineteenth-century Nonconformist or Puritan tradition, which abhorred the French as being either atheists or Roman Catholics and in any case immoral. No doubt, however, the English have a natural difficulty in understanding the French; and perhaps the French have an equal difficulty in understanding the English, although there is no widespread anti-English feeling in France, or at any rate it is not so fundamental as anti-French feeling in England seems to be. Sometimes the French get very angry with us for some particular reason, but when the reason is removed the anger dies down.

It is unfortunate that two peoples living so near together, who have so many interests in common, should find so much difficulty in understanding each other. The excuse often given in England for anti-French feeling is that French policy since the war is to a great extent responsible for the existence of Nazi Germany. It is not a good excuse. No doubt French policy from the end of the war until 1924 was often foolish and irritating, but the Nazi movement did not become a serious political force in Germany until 1930, when important concessions had been made to Germany and the Treaty of Versailles had undergone considerable revision. The English are too much disposed to forget their own share of responsibility for the diplomacy that led to the war and for the

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worst provisions of the peace treaties, but I cannot go into that question now. There is in England an atmosphere of uncertainty and disquietude. Few people seem to have any clear idea of what British policy is, still less of what it ought to be. The rearmament program is accepted by the great majority of people as an unwelcome necessity, but nobody seems to know for what exact purpose the increased armaments are to be used. Naturally their purpose is said to be that of defense. Defense against whom? Most people would probably say against Germany, but nobody seems to be quite sure. Some people say—it is said officially—that we are rearming so as to be able to fulfil our obligations. Exactly what obligations? Again nobody seems to have any very definite idea. It is generally understood that we should support France, Belgium, and perhaps Holland in resisting any unprovoked aggression, but nothing else is certain. As to the obligations of the Covenant of the League of Nations, few people seem to take them seriously.

The desire to avoid war at all costs is widespread, but in most cases it is not, so far as I can judge, based on pacifist principles. Probably ninety-nine people out of a hundred would be willing to go to war if England were attacked, but there is, I think, a feeling that although war is probable in Europe, England will somehow or other manage to keep out of it, and that so long as England keeps out of it, it does not matter. Unwillingness to run the risk of war in any circumstances is due less to pacifist sentiment than to the desire to have a good time. So people shut their eyes and ears, put everything unpleasant out of their minds, and think as little as possible. I am told, for instance, by friends intimately connected with the stage that the public mentality in regard to the theater is very much what it was during the Great War. There is no hope of a good run for any play that is at all tragic or ironical or satirical. What the public want is to be made to laugh—and forget—and it takes very little to make them laugh. If this be true, it is surely a disquieting symptom. Many things in England remind one too much of people dancing on the rim of a volcano.

Yet I am convinced that, if only there were leadership, there is a body of opinion in England prepared to face the facts of the European situation and to support the measures necessary to deal with it. The remarkable vote in favor of collective security that was given in the peace ballot represented a feeling that is not dead but only dormant. Unfortunately there is no leadership and no effective political opposition. The Labor Party more than held its own in the recent election of the London County Council, because its local administration has been successful, but the results of parliamentary by-elections show that it is gaining little or no ground in the country as a whole. Readers of Harold Laski's articles in *The Nation* will understand why. The leaders of the party in Parliament feebly criticize the foreign policy of the government in detail, but they show no sign of understanding it, and they acquiesce in its main lines. If they are sincere, they are as much taken in by it as the public in general. They even believe, or pretend to believe, that the policy of "non-intervention" in Spain was initiated by the French government, whose lead the British government followed. Yet it must be clear to anybody who does not shut his eyes to facts that the aim of the British government in initiating that policy and imposing it on France was to secure the victory of the Spanish rebels. The British naval authorities at Gibraltar do not conceal their sympathy with the rebels and have semi-official relations with Franco.

The way in which the government and the Foreign Office have succeeded in deceiving public opinion about the real nature and aims of British policy is one of the most disquieting factors in the situation. There are actually people who write to the papers to complain that our policy is dictated by France and that we are altruistically sacrificing British interests! A young English girl who was dining in American company in Geneva a few months ago remarked that it was unpleasant to be on the Continent because nobody would believe that British policy was so altruistic and disinterested as all English people knew it to be. She was quite surprised when everybody laughed. She was as sincere as she was typical.

British diplomacy must be judged by its acts and their results, not by Eden's speeches. Its results were described in my article published in *The Nation* of February 27. I have too high an opinion of the skill and intelligence of British diplomacy not to be convinced that those results were deliberately aimed at. Unless British diplomats are imbeciles, as they are not, the only hypothesis that accounts for their policy is that they hope to buy off Hitler by giving him a free hand in Europe east of the Rhine until England is sufficiently strongly armed to make it hopeless for him to attack the British Empire or France and can force him to come to terms. Indeed, persons in close touch with the ruling spirits of the Foreign Office say this openly in private and mention three years as the period during which it will be necessary to keep Hitler occupied east of the Rhine. France—and also Belgium and Holland—must be defended against any German attack because they are the buffer states between England and Germany, and England can never allow any French, Belgian, or Dutch port to be in the hands of Germany. That is what Baldwin meant when he said, "Our frontier is on the Rhine." It therefore becomes necessary to detach France from any commitments east of the Rhine lest they should lead to a situation in which England would be obliged to intervene. That means reducing France to the position of a third-rate power, subordinated to England and ultimately to England and Germany if those two countries can come to an agreement. England will always intervene if Germany invades France, for the reasons already mentioned. It is therefore unnecessary for France to make any sacrifices to secure English support in that event, and the policy of the French government is a dupe's game.

In the London *Observer* of March 14, J. L. Garvin, who little more than two years ago described Nazi Germany as Public Enemy Number One but is now an enthusiastic supporter of Hitler and Mussolini, openly declared in favor of the creation of "a united Middle

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Europe' under German leadership." He said at that time:

> Such a federated system would contain at least 150,000,000 of people with an equal wealth of industrial and agricultural resources. It would be able to hold its own in all ways and circumstances—thus removing one of Herr Hitler's chief anxieties for the future—against the Soviet power which controls 8,000,000 square miles of territory and within a few years will number 200,000,000 of people. Russia, content with its own enormous scale, would have to relinquish the Soviet pacts against the Reich, and waive opposition to a united Middle Europe under German headship. That is one further practical condition of constructive peace. Another condition is that Britain should favor the project as essential to the renewed safety and progress of European civilization; and as part of any serious conception of an Anglo-German settlement.

This monstrous proposal to give Nazi Germany the hegemony of Europe undoubtedly represents the view of important capitalist and financial interests in England, which regard Nazi Germany as a bulwark against communism and fear France as a "left" country. It probably also represents the view of some members of the British government, and it may even be a kite flown to test public opinion. In any case Garvin's proposal is the logical conclusion of present British policy, and one may be grateful to him for saying openly what many people think but do not say. At least we know what to expect. Will the British Labor Party at last recognize the danger and organize a campaign throughout the country against the betrayal of European democracy and civilization? I wish I could confidently answer the question in the affirmative.

Nebraska Fights for Survival

BY MAXWELL S. STEWART

Lincoln, Nebraska, March 20

THE fate of a great state hangs on the decision of two supreme courts—its own and that of the United States. A favorable decision by the two courts means that the state can launch an enterprise to irrigate from 500 to 1,000 square miles of what was once among the richest agricultural land in the country. It will also make possible the production of a vast amount of cheap electric power for industrial and agricultural uses. Defeat in the courts may consign thousands of farmers to a desperate and losing fight against the encroaching desert, and threaten the economic well-being of the entire state.

For central and western Nebraska the drought of 1934 and 1936 spelled not mere temporary misfortune but a crushing defeat in a struggle against diminishing fertility which has been under way for more than two decades. Thirty years ago there was land in the central area which produced up to fifty bushels of wheat an acre in good seasons. Today the farmers on this same land consider themselves lucky to get fifteen bushels an acre. In bad years there is no crop. A part of the difficulty can be attributed to the recent subnormal rainfall. The average precipitation for Nebraska for the past sixty years has been about 23.5 inches, ranging from 34 inches in the southeast to about 16 inches on the western border. For the past six years the average for the state has been only 19 inches.

But more serious than the succession of abnormally dry years is the depletion of the soil itself. Although this section of Nebraska has been intensively farmed only during the present century, approximately 40 per cent of the nitrogen and humus in the soil has been exhausted. The land has also suffered severely from erosion, particularly in the western section. Many other states have faced a similar depletion of agricultural resources without economic retrogression. But Nebraska is one of the three states in the Union which are almost totally without resources apart from the land. It has no coal, oil, or other minerals. What industry exists is dependent on agriculture either for its market or as the source of raw materials.

In the central and western parts of the state the traveler sees unmistakable signs of deterioration. Many farms have been abandoned; the farmers who remain are cultivating larger and larger areas in an effort to make a living. Houses are badly in want of paint; repairs have been neglected. There is a notable absence of dairy cattle, pigs, and poultry. Most of the farms are marred by great gullies which carry off the sadly needed rainfall. The general appearance of the area is strikingly similar to that of the arid regions of North China, where agriculture has been all but abandoned.

It is only natural that the inhabitants of the state should be deeply concerned over the outlook. Yet mixed with apprehension is the hope that irrigation can more than make up for the ravages of drought and erosion. And there is an excellent chance that their hopes will be fulfilled. On September 28, 1935, the PWA made an initial allotment of $10,000,000 toward the construction of a great dam on the North Platte River, some 200 miles west of Hastings—to be known as the Keystone Dam—which would make possible the irrigation of 500,000 acres of rich loess soil in Gosper, Phelps, Kearney, and Adams counties. Supplemental reservoirs on Plum Creek may subsequently permit the extension of the irrigated area by another 100,000 to 200,000 acres. In addition, the project calls for the construction of two power stations which will have an annual output of some 235,000,000 kilowatt hours of electrical energy. It is esti-

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mated that this energy could be delivered to the municipal plants in the area for a flat rate of 7 or 7½ mills per kilowatt hour, which is considerably less than the cost of production in the most efficient steam plant in the region. When completed with irrigation canals and transmission lines as far east as Omaha, the project will have cost some $32,000,000.

While the irrigation aspect of the program is unquestionably more important, the production of power is essential if the costs of supplying water are to be kept at a reasonable figure. Soil experts estimate that twelve inches of irrigation water supplied during the growing season would be sufficient to guarantee maximum crops every year, regardless of droughts. Moreover, irrigation would make possible the growth of leguminous crops, such as alfalfa and sweet clover, which would restore the fertility of the soil. Given an adequate supply of water, the area can support an agricultural population from two to four times as large as the present one.

The project of the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, known as the Tri-County project, is the largest of three important power developments which the PWA is financing for this area. But the others are by no means unimportant. About fifty miles northwest of Lincoln is the Loop River power project, now completed with its turbines practically ready to generate energy. This development, known as the Columbus project, has cost $11,000,000 to date and will have a total annual output of 165,000,000 kilowatt hours. Although it has a small storage reservoir, there is no provision for irrigation. Two hundred miles farther west, just south of the city of North Platte, is the Platte Valley Public Power and Irrigation District, known as the Sutherland project, which is fully completed and in the process of filling its reservoirs. The Sutherland development cost approximately $10,000,000 and has an estimated annual output of 151,000,000 kilowatt hours. It supplies water to previously installed irrigation ditches serving some 100,000 acres.

Something of the magnitude of the three projects can be seen when we note that in addition to irrigating 600,000 acres they can furnish 490,000,000 kilowatt hours of "firm" power. It is planned to distribute this throughout the central and eastern part of the state as far as Omaha. Since the total power production in the same area at present is only slightly more than 500,000,000 kilowatt hours, the PWA projects will nearly double the electric-power production of the region.

It appears to be a magnificent program, second only to the TVA in its social and economic implications. As an outsider I expected to find that every Nebraskan was conscious of its full meaning for the state. To my astonishment, however, I have found a considerable amount of opposition to the key project, the Tri-County development, among certain groups. Despite the explicit approval given to the project by the Governor and the State Planning Commission, efforts were made to prevent it from obtaining federal funds. After the funds were allotted, an attempt was made to prevent the state engineer from granting permission to build the Keystone Dam, which alone can make possible the vast irrigation project. When the state engineer approved the program, its opponents carried the fight to the Nebraska Supreme Court, where they obtained a ruling on June 29, 1936, voiding his action on the ground that it was illegal to take water outside the watershed of a stream. It happens that 300,000 acres of the 500,000 which are to be irrigated lie across a slight divide in the valley of the Republican River. Yet this land can be irrigated only from the Platte.

Meanwhile five of the local power companies, affiliates of the Insull, Stone and Webster, Electric Bond and Share, and the United Light and Power interests, have asked the Supreme Court of the United States for an injunction which would prevent any of the government-supported projects from selling power in competition with the private companies. While this suit is pending, Tri-County cannot obtain funds for the construction of its power station and transmission lines. The other projects, having already been completed, are permitted to build certain transmission lines but are forbidden to link up with each other.

To cap the climax, opponents of the Tri-County project have returned to the Nebraska Supreme Court to contest the amended water rights which would permit the Tri-County authorities to build the Keystone Dam and irrigate within the Platte River watershed. Until this case is settled, the PWA cannot even advance the major part of the $10,000,000 already allotted. Opponents of the project have also introduced a number of bills in Nebraska's unicameral legislature with a view to killing all undertakings of this type. One of these bills provides that all directors of an irrigation project must live within the watershed that is affected, and forbids irrigation authorities to build or own reservoirs, dams, or power plants outside the irrigation district. These provisions would hamper if not destroy every important irrigation and power project in the state.

Strangely enough, a large part of the opposition to Tri-County has come from the directors of the Sutherland project. It is difficult to get at the roots of this antagonism, but it appears to be based in part on sectionalism, in part on personal and political jealousies, and in part on basic differences in economic and social outlook. The struggle over irrigation is but part of a long-drawn-out conflict between the progressive political forces of the state affiliated with Senator Norris and the powerful political machine which has been built up by Senator Burke and Arthur Mullen, former Democratic national committeeman. It happens that Mr. Mullen, while national committeeman, obtained the grants for the Columbus and Sutherland projects before Tri-County could even obtain a hearing. Some months later the President forced him to resign his position on the National Committee, and he is now engaged in trying to collect upwards of $50,000 from the PWA for "legal services." The Mullen machine has been closely tied up with the utility interests and has naturally opposed public power development.

A further basis for the fundamental difference in

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outlook between the officials of the Sutherland project and those of Tri-County may be found in the nature of their respective enterprises. Sutherland has no large reservoir, which means that it will presumably not be able to operate at full capacity in dry seasons. Estimates of the amount of "firm" or steady power which can be produced vary widely, but it cannot be more than 90,000,000 kilowatt hours annually, and without the Keystone Dam the project may have no firm power whatsoever. This prevents Sutherland from selling its output to the municipal plants and farmers of the area unless it is linked with another producer. Lacking such a link, it has little choice but to sell its energy to the private power companies at "dump-power" rates. It would, of course, be possible for Sutherland to "firm up" its power by connecting with the Tri-County and Columbus projects, but this is precisely what the private power companies are seeking to prevent. A contract exists between Columbus and Tri-County, but the Sutherland officials have refused to be affiliated in a three-cornered deal. And they have insisted that the construction of the Tri-County power plants would make it more difficult for them to dispose of their power. The Tri-County authorities deny that the new project will create a surplus of electrical energy. They point out that the private companies have fixed their rates so high that they have scarcely touched the rich agricultural market for electricity. Nebraska ranks twenty-ninth among the states in the Union in the percentage of farms which are supplied with electric current.

Considerable opposition to the Tri-County project is also to be found in the region around Grand Island, thirty miles northeast of Hastings. A Platte River Water Protective Association has been formed which has as its battle slogan "Platte River for the Platte Valley." While this organization may have utility backing, it is nourished by a real fear that the Tri-County project may rob the area north of the Platte River of its present water resources. There are two issues involved, both somewhat bewildering to an Easterner. One is the contention by farmers along the Platte that the building of the Keystone Dam would deprive them of their riparian rights —which they interpret to mean the privilege of watching the river flow by filled to the banks. While Nebraska laws furnish some basis for this contention, the United States Supreme Court has definitely rejected this conception of riparian rights. Consequently, Nebraskans may wake up some day and find that the surplus water of the Platte has been granted to Wyoming or Colorado on the ground that Nebraska was not making full use of it.

The second claim appears at first sight to be a little more substantial. Residents of the north bank of the Platte claim that a diversion of the river's waters would rob the region of at least a portion of its precious store of underground water. A careful study of this subterranean water supply has been made by A. L. Lugn of the Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division and L. K. Wenzel of the United States Geological Survey. They concluded that the recent depletion of these resources was not permanent and was due primarily to dry weather. Very little of this underground water comes from the Platte River; the bulk of it flows down from the sand hills of northern Nebraska, and the remainder is mostly obtained from rainfall.

Despite the opposition of these groups, the Nebraska Supreme Court is expected to hand down shortly a decision granting the Tri-County authorities the necessary water rights. This will permit work to be begun on the Keystone Dam and such irrigation ditches as have not already been constructed. There will still remain the problem of finding some way to irrigate the 300,000 acres that happen to be outside the Platte River watershed. This means that the obstructing law of 1895 will have to be repealed. Once these two battles have been won, the fight should narrow down to a clear-cut struggle between the utilities and the people of Nebraska over the question of public power production. With the issue thus clearly drawn it is doubtful whether even the Supreme Court can prevent Nebraska from obtaining the irrigation and cheap power it so desperately needs.

A Hundred White Horses

BY AGNES SMEDLEY

HORSES are valuable beasts, thought the long, brown old peasant. He was a man as brown as the earth on which he sat, and he was as motionless as a stone. The only clothing he wore was a pair of gray cotton trousers, and they also blended with the color of the earth. Valuable beasts, the old peasant kept thinking. His thoughts were not idle day dreams, either, for his eyes were following a slowly moving herd of horses across the River Sing. What a shame that those horses belonged to the Fifth White Army—what a shame! The Red Army could use a good horse like one of those over there. His son, a Red Army soldier, had once captured two horses almost from under the Whites, and had taken them to the red military headquarters. His son was a hero—no doubt about that.

The old man sat on Soviet territory north of the River Sing and looked across at the herd of horses on the southern bank, where the Whites occupied and ruled the countryside. From over there they kept sending raiding parties into Soviet territory. The river was the boundary line. The people over there all helped the Soviets when they could, but the Whites were cruel if they caught a man. Now, right there before his eyes was a whole herd of horses, no less than a hundred grazing peacefully, and no one in sight. Suppose he crossed over and picked out a horse. He squatted motionless as a stone as he thought and watched. No, not a soul in sight. So he might as well swim over, look about, and if he saw no one, see what the horses would do.

He moved down to the river, waded out, and began to swim. But would a horse obey him and swim the river on the way back? He wondered about many things, and above the water his eyes scanned the bank and the hill before him. He felt earth, stood upright, stood dead

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still near a small tree for a time as he looked about, then crept up the hillside. The leading horse did not take fright when he went near, but continued grazing peacefully. The old man took a last look around, then went up and patted the horse gently on the nose and rubbed its glossy neck. The horse nosed against him gratefully. They liked each other from the start.

The old man threw his arm over the animal's neck, gently patting and prodding it. It began obediently to move down toward the river. The whole herd of horses stopped grazing, looked up, and then began moving slowly behind them. The old man's heart was in his throat. Silly beasts, he thought. Anyone watching would know something was wrong. He leaped on his chosen animal and, guiding and prodding, rode him to the river, out into the water. And then he felt the animal begin to swim.

From behind he heard splashing that became ever louder, and he looked back anxiously. All the horses were going into the stream. Many hesitated, then began to swim obediently. The old man's heart beat so hard against his ribs that he could hear it. The whole drove of horses was swimming swiftly. The old man clung to his animal desperately, exulting but fearful. One rifle shot from behind and he would be finished.

He felt his horse touch Soviet soil and begin to scramble up the bank. Then the others began to clamber after. The old peasant grasped the mane of his animal tighter, kicked him in the ribs, and tried to force him into a trot or a gallop. Now all the horses were free of the stream, following up the path and over the hill. They were trotting with a thunderous noise. They crossed the hill and made straight for the narrow pass through a stony mountain. The horses whinnied, and Red Guards stood in amazement as the wet old man and a hundred wet horses trotted through the pass. The old man seemed drunk and kept yelling at the guards that he had "confiscated" a drove of White horses.

Inside the pass they turned off to the right toward a village. Crowds of women and children and a few men ran out and watched in amazement. The old man brought his horse to a stop right at the door of the local Soviet. All the women and a few men inside had run out and stood on the threshold, gaping in astonishment. A small unit of red soldiers at drill on a nearby square had halted and run up. The old man guided his horse to the square and looked back to see that all the others followed. He had lived long, but never had such a moment as this come to the life of any man; for there was a herd of horses obeying his will, and there were hundreds of people—with red soldiers among them—standing back and watching. The old man was dizzy, yet clear-headed enough to slide off his animal, pat it, and talk to it.

Turning to the villagers crowding nearer, he said: "They are White horses. I swam over to get me a horse, and then the whole drove followed. I was sitting and thinking—" He could speak no more. His own excitement halted him. And the people began to laugh; so that some of them fell down and sat there shrieking.

Somewhere the red soldiers had found a rope and were stringing it around the square to keep the horses from escaping. The children were pulling up grass and feeding it to the animals. Some of the animals threw up their heads and frisked away, but others ate the grass. The villagers were delighted and they all began pulling up grass, offering it, and calling the horses that took it all kinds of sweet names. "You beautiful darling—oh you nice old thing—lovely horsey." Such extravagance was enough to make a man laugh until he split.

The old peasant at last found his tongue and began telling the whole story. When he finished, the people laughed themselves half to death. The men slapped the old fellow on the back until it was sore. But he was so excited and so proud that they could have slapped him into pulp and he would not have felt it. So he told the story again, and that night he told it again to a still bigger crowd that came from other villages. They made him repeat it many times and they laughed until their jaws ached. Some of them knew the story by heart so that when the old man left out any detail they corrected him and put it in.

"The beasts are Soviet sympathizers—that's why they followed you," some wit remarked to a roar of laughter.

The old man slept hardly a wink that night. But sleep was unimportant at such a time as this. The next morning he and four others would take the beasts over the hills to the north, to Red Army headquarters. He, of course, would ride in front on his beautiful animal. What a horse it was, to be sure! The old man sighed at the thought of parting with it. The whole village was up by daybreak to see the procession start. A rough halter looped over the nose of his animal served as bridle, and a piece of thick wadded cloth served as a saddle for the old man. The other men rode in similar fashion, but they rode in the far rear, driving the horses before them. A crowd of admirers followed them for a *li* beyond the village.

Other villages had already heard of this great victory and were waiting. They saw the old man come in sight, then behind him the grand procession of horses, brought up by four men. It was as good as a demonstration, and people applauded and waved and yelled. When the procession stopped at noon, the old man told his story anew to strange villagers, who fed the men and the horses.

In this way they finally reached Red Army headquarters. Commanders and fighting men were accustomed to many unusual things, but this was a joy they would not forget. The lean old man told them his story and then they fell in each other's arms or sat down and laughed, and a number of them embraced the old man and insisted that he sit down and have something to eat and drink.

He stayed at headquarters for two days, making himself acquainted with affairs of the world, an honored guest. His son returned from the front on the second day and stood grinning at his father.

"You see, my son, you captured two horses, but I, an old man, captured a hundred."

The son grinned from ear to ear. And everybody laughed.

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BROUN'S PAGE

The Lowest Branch

AFTER the Assembly of the State of New York had killed the child-labor amendment, I wrote to the 102 members who had voted against the measure and expressed my opinion that they had participated in the dirtiest day's work ever done in the lower house at Albany. I wrote as president of the American Newspaper Guild, since the organized editorial workers of this country have frequently gone on record as against the exploitation of the immature. The problem touches our own craft, since many publishers employ children as carriers and newsboys. In the jargon of the Publishers' Association they are known as "little merchants."

In writing to the assemblymen I mentioned the unassailable fact that labor groups throughout the state intended to remember the offenders and work against them when they came up for reelection. The intellectual level of New York's lower house is not very high. Its courage is somewhat less. The two forces which the legislators feared quite obviously were the prelates of the Catholic church and the newspaper owners of the state. I trust they will learn to their sorrow that their defiance of the strong position of labor was, among other things, a major political error.

A number of replies have come from the gentlemen of the lower house; their letters are sometimes illiterate and almost invariably on the moronic side. Instead of making a selection I will simply pick three from the top of the pile and let them stand as exhibits A, B, and C. The first which comes to hand is from Mario J. Cariello. Mr. Cariello writes, "No more consideration or weight need be accorded remarks such as yours than are worthy of the speaker thereof."

Just try and scan that sentence on your scanner. But the second, which comes from Chauncy B. Hammond, is a good deal longer and somewhat more incoherent. Mr. Hammond writes:

"Your circular letter of the tenth, addressed to other members of the New York State Legislature, came to me as a part, I assume, of your program to urge upon the members of the legislature who voted against the youth-control amendment to the Constitution, commonly, but erroneously, known as the child-labor amendment.

"Assuming that you are a newspaperman and a man of education, may I suggest that the language used in your letter is not consistent with that usually employed by men who presume to occupy the position suggested by your letterhead. I appreciate the fact that you have but expressed in most distasteful language your private opinion of the members of the legislature. You know as I do that the bill presented to the New York State Legislature was one of the rankest communistic bills ever presented to any legislative body. You know as do I that it was the intention of the proponents of this bill to regulate, limit, and prohibit the labor of youth under eighteen years of age. You know, and so do I, that it was one of the steps that such persons as you and your cohorts sought to impose upon the American public whereby the state could step in and direct the thoughts and acts of the youth of our land as in the communistic and socialistic state that you so desire. I am happy that it was my privilege, together with 101 other red-blooded American citizens, to defeat the aims of yourself and your kind, and I wish to say to you that so long as I live, I will resist by my vote and by my voice on the public platform such legislature [*sic*] as this. The time has come when you and the group you claim to represent must recognize the fact that this is the United States of America and not communistic Russia or any other country.

"I have no more use for you or those who you claim to represent than has the devil for holy water, if the analogy is at all consistent."

As for the consistency of Mr. Hammond's analogy in which he compares himself to the devil, I can only say that it is perfect. I could not have assigned him a more suitable role after his vote against the child-labor amendment. But I should like him to justify his contention that the Newspaper Guild does not possess the right to state its opinion to elected representatives in the lower branch of the legislature. What has become of those fine old American rights of petition and free speech? Does the gentleman in Albany honestly maintain that labor becomes communistic simply because it chooses to be articulate?

The voters of New York should make a much closer scrutiny of the men and women who are nominated for the state legislature. To a great extent these jobs have gone by default. Perfectly preposterous people reach Albany as unregarded pebbles in some particular political landslide. As in the case of new voters, there ought to be a literacy test for members of the Assembly. No man should be elected unless he is able to read and write. May I point out that Mr. Hammond seems confused as to the nature of some simple words which ought to be down his alley. What he is thinking of in his first sentence I shall never be able to tell you because, after employing a subject and a transitive verb, Mr. Hammond has completely forgotten the necessity of an object.

As exhibit C, I have a letter from Frank G. Miller. I'm at a loss to know whether Assemblyman Miller is filled with remorse or not strong in logic. At any rate he writes: "My comment on your letter of March 10 is as follows: There is no act so dirty but what it is soon followed by one a thousand times dirtier. The statement of your organization of the Assembly's action on the child-labor amendment, to my mind, comprises that act."

I rest my case.

HEYWOOD BROUN

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

GEOMETRY'S FOURTH ANGLE

BY JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

EDDINGTON, Jeans, and the rest have put the reader of popular science in a strange position. All too often he has learned to talk about "curved space" and "frames of reference" while preserving an ignorance so complete that he would not recognize a differential equation if he saw one. For that reason a popular introduction to formal mathematics is sorely needed, and at first sight that is what Lancelot Hogben's "Mathematics for the Million"* appears to be. Actually, however, the book is both a good deal more and a good deal less—a frequently brilliant and no less frequently exasperating exposition of some of the main principles of practical calculation plus the author's interpretation of history and his very intransigent personal convictions concerning the only true end of mathematical processes.

Being a Fellow of the Royal Society and a member of the faculty of the London School of Economics, it is not surprising that Professor Hogben should be interested in his subject primarily as a tool, or that social statistics should seem to him even more important than the physical sciences. Obviously his main purpose is to enable the average citizen to make sense out of means, medians, curves of distribution, probable errors, and the rest, but in his more than six hundred pages—most of them fairly stiff reading—he lays a very broad foundation of arithmetic, geometry, algebra, and calculus. At the same time, however, he undertakes something I have never seen undertaken before. Geometry has hitherto recognized three kinds of angles: obtuse, acute, and right. Professor Hogben adds a fourth—the left, or class, angle. There is, said Archimedes, no royal road to geometry. Professor Hogben spends a great deal of his time in the effort to prove that there is, nevertheless, a proletarian one.

Despite its persistently obtruded eccentricities, the work is, as I have said, often solid and brilliant. The approach to the solution of each problem through the history of that problem has an enormous advantage over the method of the textbooks, where demonstrations are always presented as *faits accomplis* so perfected and so tidied up that one is usually left wondering how they were ever hit upon; and I am frank to confess that the reading of this book furnished me with many insights I never achieved during the undergraduate days when I "majored" in mathematics. Nor is Professor Hogben's "economic interpretation" of the development of mathematics by any means all nonsense. It is, for example, a commonly accepted fact that some of the limitations of Greek geometry are traceable to the aristocratic preference for the study of static form over the study of movement and change. His treatment of the famous paradox of Zeno—the supposed theoretical impossibility that the hare of the fable will ever actually overtake the tortoise—is most ingenious, and the demonstration that the solution could not be reached until, at the Reformation, a mercantile civilization "took time away from the priests by taking saints out of the calendar" is delightful. But there are also times when Professor Hogben allows his hobby to ride him. Nor is it only that his impatience with everything not "practical" leads him to despise what more devoted mathematicians called "elegance" and to treat "rigidity of proof" so cavalierly that the treatise on the science of mathematics seems at times about to degenerate into a mere Ready Reckoner.

Frequently his preference for the practical rises shrilly into moral indignation. In the history of mathematics Good has been engaged against Evil. Anyone tainted with an interest in "pure" mathematics was an oppressor of the people and anyone who holds that mathematics has any meaning except as a tool would really like, if the truth were known, to take bread out of the mouths of workers. Yet it seems to me that something very much like his own method may be turned against him. When he says, in italics, that "solving problems is not a special gift but merely the art of applying fixed rules of grammar," it is plain that he wants to believe this because it sounds hopefully democratic. The fact remains, however, that it is true only in so far as the more routine processes of algebra or calculus are concerned. Try telling it to any competent mathematician who has struggled to get a solution for a difficult differential equation and then seen the feat accomplished by another with a gift more like the gift for chess than the mere ability to follow rules.

Near the beginning of his book Professor Hogben speaks of mathematics as "the language of size" and returns time and time again to this perilously inexact analogy. It would be much nearer the truth to say that mathematics is the *logic* of size. Essentially, in other words, it is not a method of making statements about what we know but a method of discovering something we do not know. Mere formulas are, to be sure, statements. If I say that $s = \frac{1}{2} gt^2$, that is a statement which may mean that the distance passed over by a body falling in a vacuum is equal to one-half the square of the time it has been falling, multiplied by a certain number which varies with the point on the earth's surface toward which the body is falling. If I add also that $ds/dt = gt$ I may be saying that at any instant the speed of that falling body is equal to the time it has

* W. W. Norton and Company. $3.75.

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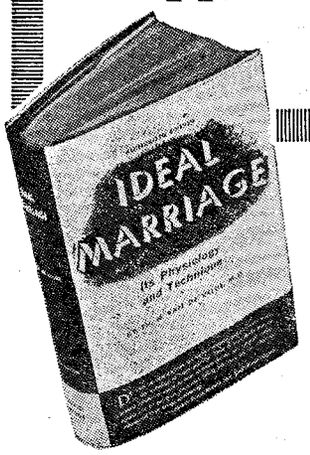
The one subject most important to personal happiness—yet many people go through life woefully uninformed about it!



NO engineer would dream of building a bridge without a blueprint. Even a housewife, embarking on the business of furnishing her family with food, uses a recipe book!

Yet how many people face the task of making a success of marriage in its most important aspect, that of sexual relations, without any other guide than their "instincts" or the information (and misinformation) they may have picked up haphazardly!

As Dr. Van de Velde has said, "much marital unhappiness, attributed to the apparent sexual frigidity of the wife, could be avoided and prevented if the medical profession had not allowed themselves to be deterred from explaining many technicalities of a normal married life, owing to a mixture of false modesty and professional reserve."

There are many books on the sexual life. There is *one* book which has won the unqualified approval of the medical profession and of the lay public. It is *Ideal Marriage, Its Physiology and Technique*, by T. H. Van de Velde, M.D. It is different from any "sex book" you ever read, or read about. It is:

1. AUTHORITATIVE. Dr. Van de Velde is an internationally famous Dutch gynaecologist (former head of the Gynaecological Clinic of Haarlem).

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4. UPLIFTING. It gives to marriage new dignity, new glamor, and new romance—because it explains the *physical bases* of spiritual and emotional satisfactions.

The price of this book is $7.50. You would, no doubt, gladly pay more than that for equivalent information to a physician—who would quite probably *refer you to Dr. Van de Velde's work.* And do not forget this—after you have read all other books on the subject, including those made to sell at a lower figure, you would still return to "IDEAL MARRIAGE" as the ultimate, *complete* authority; the one safe and *sane* guide.

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IDEAL MARRIAGE

ITS PHYSIOLOGY & TECHNIQUE • By Th. H. Van de Velde, M.D.

"This is the book on the physical problems of marriage we have all been waiting for. It had to be written; and written exactly in this way—soberly, scientifically, completely, without a scintilla of eroticism, and yet with a sustained note of high idealism."
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"There is little doubt that its general circulation would do more to lessen divorce and conjugal unhappiness and to promote successful family life than all the religious exhortations from Moses to Manning."—HARRY ELMER BARNES, in the New York World Telegram.

"This is a highly civilized book. . . . Dr. Van de Velde has distinguished himself beyond all his predecessors in accomplishing the task which he outlines."
—American Journal of Psychiatry.

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been falling, multiplied by this same number. But those two statements do not represent a mathematical process. Mathematics consists neither in such statements nor in mere rules for connecting them but in the logic which enables us to say that if one is either assumed or observed to be true, the other (which cannot be observed) must be true; and in this particular instance that logic consists in the determination of the instantaneous rate of change of s with respect to t—which logic, by the way, happens to be the foundation of differential calculus.

Note that I was careful to say that the two mathematical statements may mean what I translated them to mean. The "may" is important because the mathematical statements might mean many other things quite dissimilar—as for instance that the slope of the tangent to a certain curve was so and so. And this is important because it illustrates an important fact, namely, that mathematical statements and mathematical deductions are extremely generalized and reveal mathematical resemblances between things which seem to have no relation to each other; that they are so generalized, indeed, as to give some justification for the attitude toward them which seems to Professor Hogben the root of all evil. Perhaps those very thinkers who conclude that mathematics deals with a realm of logic far more extensive than the realm of phenomena which nature happens to illustrate are engaged in a speculation which is not useful. Certainly they are going at the matter from an angle quite different from that chosen by Professor Hogben. But is it really necessary to regard them as moral lepers? It is true that Pythagorus—whom he regards with a jaundiced eye—did have some very queer convictions about the soul and what men should eat. They did not, however, prevent him from having "ideas that are a lot of use about the square of the hypotenuse"; and personally I think it would be a mistake to insist upon liquidating everyone who happens to disagree with us about the true nature of the square root of minus one.

BOOKS

Mouse Meat

NIGHTWOOD. By Djuna Barnes. With an Introduction by T. S. Eliot. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

MR. ELIOT is right when he says of this novel that it is "really 'written.' " It is too consistently "written" for quotations to mean much, nor does any sentence contain the whole. Yet if Mr. Eliot is also right in the analogy he suggests with poetry, the book can be searched for good "lines." And they are easily found. Some of them are witty:

> She defiled the very meaning of personality in her passion to be a person.
>
> She was one of the most unimportantly wicked women of her time—because she could not let her time alone, and yet could never be a part of it. She wanted to be the reason for everything and so was the cause of nothing.
>
> "She speaks of people taking away her 'faith' in them, as if faith were a transportable object—all her life she has been subject to the feeling of 'removal.' "
>
> "She was really like those people who, coming unexpectedly into a room, silence the company because they are looking for someone who is not there."

And some of them are pretty in a tremendous way:

> "We are but skin about a wind, with muscles clenched against mortality."
>
> "And what of the sleep of animals? The great sleep of the elephant, and the fine thin sleep of the bird?"
>
> "I began to wail for all the little beasts in their mothers who would have to step down and begin going decent in the one fur that would last them their time."
>
> "Man was born damned and innocent from the start, and wretchedly—as he must—on those two themes—whistles his tune."
>
> "I went toward the Ile because I could see the lights in the show-windows of Our Lady and all the children in the dark with the tapers twinkling, saying their prayers softly with that small breath that comes off little lungs, whispering fatally about nothing, which is the way children say their prayers."

But the poetry of which Mr. Eliot must have been speaking will be found on a third level, as far removed from these as the poetry of our time is from mere wit, mere charm. On Miss Barnes's third level a special state of consciousness is constructed and a very special sort of thing is said. When Mr. Eliot writes of "Nightwood" that "only sensibilities trained on poetry can wholly appreciate it," he means, of course, modern poetry. Sensibilities trained on Horace and Pope, or even on Homer and Shakespeare, would make nothing of it at all. For those poets in their various ways accepted the world and trusted the commonplace; whereas this one stares away from her in a rigor of horror, probing distance with fixed eyes in the hope that it will yield a niche where the contemporary mind, trained on distrust and disgust, can lose itself in stretches of time beyond our time. The vessel of life may have something in it, but first it must be smashed.

> Felix thought to himself that undoubtedly the doctor was a great liar, but a valuable liar. His fabrications seemed to be the framework of a forgotten but imposing plan; some condition of life of which he was the sole surviving retainer.
>
> "The modern child has nothing left to hold to, or, to put it better, he has nothing to hold with. We are adhering to life now with our last muscle—the heart."
>
> "The reason the doctor knows everything is because he's been everywhere at the wrong time and has now become anonymous."
>
> "The French are disheveled and wise; the American tries to approximate it with drink. It is his only clue to himself. He takes it when his soap has washed him too clean for identification. The Anglo-Saxon has made the literal error; using water, he has washed away his page. Misery melts him down by day, and sleep at night."
>
> "To be utterly innocent would be to be utterly unknown, particularly to oneself."
>
> "In time everything is possible and in space everything forgivable; life is but the intermediary vice. There is eternity to blush in."
>
> "One has, I am now certain, to be a little mad to see into the past or the future, to be a little abridged of life to know life, the obscure life."
>
> "In the acceptance of depravity the sense of the past is most fully captured."

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"It is only by such extreme measures that the average man can remember something long ago; truly, not that he remembers, but that crime itself is the door to an accumulation, a way to lay hands on the shudder of a past that is still vibrating."

"After all, calamity is what we are all seeking."

The book is like that everywhere, which is to say that for brilliance and formal beauty few novels of any age can compare with it. But one must also say how desperate it is. Mr. Eliot condemns in advance any reader who feels superior to the three chief persons of the narrative, all of whom belong to the third sex. That, however, is not the point. The point is that Miss Barnes has strained rather than enriched our sensibilities. "Nightwood" is more fascinating than interesting. The marvelous doctor who speaks so many of the lines just quoted has another aria about the women of the world who scurry out from doors at night with lamps in their hands. "Like a thousand mice they go this way and that, now fast, now slow, some halting behind doors, some trying to find the stairs, all approaching or leaving their misplaced mouse meat that lies in some cranny, on some couch, down on some floor, behind some cupboard." "Nightwood" is mouse meat at which we nibble page after page with a special kind of joy. But great fiction is more ordinary than this, and ultimately more nourishing. Beefsteak and apple pie.

MARK VAN DOREN

Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise?

THE EARNEST ATHEIST. A STUDY OF SAMUEL BUTLER. By Malcolm Muggeridge. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $2.75.

SINCE the publication in 1919 of Festing Jones's copious memoir of Samuel Butler the disparity between Butler's life and his writings has caused much speculation—a disparity now made sharper by the recent instalments of the Notebooks. Shuttling through the varied domains of the human spirit, seizing, examining, discarding one established value after another, Butler reverts to health, practical wisdom, and wealth as the basis of the good, or at least the only, life. But tormented in mind and carbuncled in body, Butler himself was a little less than wise, and especially so in the pursuit of wealth. Despite Butler's scorn for him, it was his father who gave him a generous start and who supported him after he had gathered and dissipated his small fortune. It was his father's death and money that Butler sought, and from this fact, it appears, stemmed much of Butler's rebellion. Hating the parental image for the power it early and late held over him, Butler transferred this hatred to all authority: family, education, church, even to his evanescent salvation by Darwinian science, even the tyrannical reign of the intellect itself. This endless voyage to escape the bounds of authority—with its strange ultima Thule, the bank account—dominates and warps Butler's life. Infantile, he fled from the possibility of love; as the highest manifestation of his affection he supported well-groomed but perhaps questionable young men; toward the one valuable and sincere feminine friendship that was offered him he displayed only embarrassment, annoyance, a belated and not altogether convincing remorse. His life formed of conflict and compromise, of a series of apparent failures in art, science, literature, he took refuge in the ordered precision of an old maid's existence, in a feeling of persecution, in a fervent belief in his posthumous fame—a fame for which he recorded, sometimes with a singular lack

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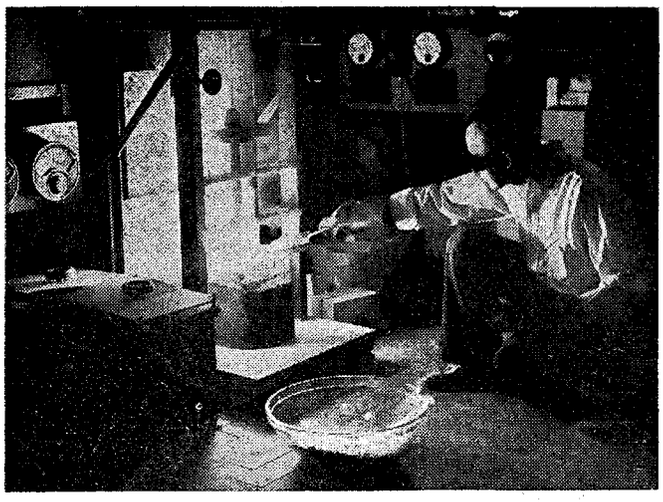

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of perspective, almost every detail of a life that was often singularly lacking in grace.

Toward this man—who was, however, a great precursor, whose intuitions and asides have been confirmed in so many ways, whose scientific findings have steadily grown in significance, whose Nowhere has almost become Everywhere, who was the author of one of the wisest and wittiest books of our time, who was in some respects the most important figure of Victorian England, whose belief, in short, in his own posthumous fame was quite warranted—Mr. Muggeridge's new study adopts a certain eccentricity of approach. All that is wrong in the modern world, Mr. Muggeridge has decided, with the exception of unspeakable Moscow, is derived from Butler. This author knows the values according to which Butler lived, and they have come to fill him "with unutterable horror." From a biographer burdened with such a thesis and displaying such ostentatious feeling one does not expect, and one does not get, an accurate portrait. For a Butlerian study one still prefers Clara Gruening Stillman's detailed and excellent biography, or even, for example, Hugh Kingsmill's essay.

To this statement, however, a note should be added. In respect to Butler's accomplishments Mr. Muggeridge exaggerates, stresses, and omits according to his emotion. Yet in respect to Butler himself the author's hate is rather more preached, I think, than practiced. On the fundamental problems of Butler's personality Mr. Muggeridge's understanding tends to get the better of him. His analyses of Butler's motivation and his descriptions of Butler's background show a penetration, an artistic power, and an ironic sense that are worthy of a better book. For all Mr. Muggeridge's studied air of antipathy no previous biographer has brought out more forcefully the pathos of Butler's disoriented life. If Mr. Muggeridge would just stop trying to be so different, he would be.

MAXWELL GEISMAR

American Jews in Chicago

THE OLD BUNCH. By Meyer Levin. The Viking Press. $3.

MEYER LEVIN'S new novel must be placed among the most ambitious efforts of contemporary fiction. Close to a thousand pages in length, intimately told and with the interest spread out almost evenly over all the characters, it attempts a vast summation and judgment of recent American history. The lives of this group of Jewish boys and girls of Chicago's West Side who grow up and assume adult responsibilities in the years between 1921 and 1934 touch on every event and experience of importance during that period. Their story and the story of their native city are well documented: business, politics, the arts, law, medicine, real estate, gang wars, strikes, Zionism, communism—these are the data and forms of their various ambitions, struggles, and failures. The immigrant parents of the "bunch" live and toil with the sole object of insuring a better deal for their American children, but none the less the ax falls. No amount of care and education can prevent these young people from being victimized by a civilization that permits little happiness or satisfaction save at the cost of a betrayal of human values. The girls fight to corral husbands and shoehorn them into a gross, vulgar life; and the problem of a livelihood faces the men like a hail of bullets. Cunning and conformity are not really a guaranty of success, for in the clash of blind forces even the most ruthless are often lost. One or two make their way to the top of the heap; the rest are beaten and bewildered; only

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a few revolt. The whole world of Chicago, of America, "seems sick and done for."

Intrinsically this is the classic American story of defeat and frustration so often presented in American literature by novelists like Dreiser, Farrell, and Dos Passos. Mr. Levin's particular distinction lies in having discerned and recreated this story within the Jewish American milieu, of which scarcely a detail of background or development escapes him. And, ironically enough, it is through showing the failure that they share with their American hosts that Mr. Levin naturalizes his Jews within their new homeland.

Though written with complete sincerity and in a language whose color and associations keep pace with the movement of events, the novel's comprehensiveness and fidelity of social observation do not wholly make up for its lack of tension. The narrative proceeds along a somewhat monotonous level, with no particular figures singled out for emphasis. Perhaps the fault here is that the author's conception of his characters is so much identical with his conception of the situations in which he places them that the contradiction between the two seldom emerges as a dramatic moment. For it is this very contradiction that makes for dramatic conflict.

PHILIP RAHV

Health Insurance

SICKNESS AND INSURANCE. A STUDY OF THE SICKNESS PROBLEM AND HEALTH INSURANCE. By Henry Alvin Millis. University of Chicago Press. $2.

IN CONCLUDING his consistently lucid, frequently penetrating, and admirably concise summary of the problem of organizing and paying for medical care, Mr. Millis has a suggestion of his own to make: that compulsory health insurance be limited to the major disabling illnesses requiring hospitalization, but that it be supplemented by extensions of the public health services, plus cash disability benefits administered through the Social Security Act. This, as Mr. Millis points out, is "the British plan turned upside down"—the emphasis of the British panel system being on general-practitioner care.

Mr. Millis's idea would also appear to be more or less Surgeon General Parran's idea. His proposal is worth thinking about, especially the tactical arguments by which he justifies it. Like most of the progressives working in this field, Mr. Millis would like desperately to get something done, and in effect he raises the question: just how good a program will the medical politicians, the quacks, the insurance companies, and the drug interests let us get away with? Not too good, probably. Let's be "practical" then. The "standard" bill flopped in 1920 partly because the industrial-insurance companies didn't like its provision for burial benefits—so that's out. But the American Medical Association has let us get our feet in the door by grudgingly approving voluntary, group hospitalization insurance. So let's expand that gain, being careful not to stir up Dr. Fishbein, who is respectfully quoted to the effect that "without the cooperation of the medical profession no system of practice can succeed."

Personally I don't see it. Both in print and from the platform I have treated Dr. Fishbein and his followers with an entirely appropriate disrespect, and I am convinced that this attitude is shared by the vast majority of informed and progressive American physicians. I am even convinced that this is the more practical method for progressives to adopt. We

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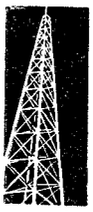

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can be sure that any program, no matter how mild, will be sniped at and whittled by the vested interests affected. Hence why not start with a sound, comprehensive program and make the medical politicians, the insurance companies, the drug interests take the onus for any whittling.

British medical politicians didn't want health insurance either, but British labor made them take it, and now British doctors like it. They'd probably have liked it better in the end if the British legislators from the beginning had paid less attention to the largely disingenuous shibboleths of the British medical politicians about "freedom of medical choice" and the like and more to the logical necessity of group practice.

Michael M. Davis writes a preface to Mr. Millis's book emphasizing a point which is not emphasized in the text: that medical benefits are today more important than cash disability benefits. The point is at least debatable. Certainly every wage worker knows that whether he gets sick or is fired, his pay stops. Hence organized labor will quite properly demand as a condition of its support that adequate cash disability benefits, however administered, be an integral part of the program.

Is it not better, tactically, to accent the very real distinctions, the widening cleavage, between the medical politicians and the increasingly progressive rank and file of the profession than to endanger the labor support without which nothing of any value can possibly be accomplished? More concretely, should not Mr. Millis pay at least as much attention to the C. I. O. as to the A. M. A.? Does not the extraordinary messiness of the French system, as described by Mr. Millis, illustrate the folly of throwing sops to medical bureaucrats?

In pointing out the dangers of Mr. Millis's tactical position, I do not mean to discount the value of his book; it is one of the most intelligent brief statements of the problem that have appeared and should be purchased by all lay and professional students of the subject.

JAMES RORTY

Master Mariner

LIVING AGAIN. By Captain Felix Riesenberg. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $3.

FELIX RIESENBERG, C. E., master mariner in sail and steam, lieutenant commander, U.S.N.R. (retired), author of many land and sea novels, of marine textbooks known the world over, has just written a book about his life called "Living Again." The outstanding part—the high adventure he never has told before in detail in any of his other works—is the account of his two years on Dane's Island in Spitzbergen as navigator for Walter Wellman, who attempted in 1907 to fly over the North Pole in a dirigible balloon.

All through the summer of 1906 the preparatory work went on—the construction of the hangar, the erection of gas apparatus, the testing of equipment—and suddenly "summer had gone and the balloon was not even out of the case. The gloom of an impending interminable night was soon to settle over Spitzbergen." The flight must be postponed until the following year, but someone must stay and look after the work done. Riesenberg volunteered. Two Norwegian sailors were chosen to stay with him; and the little bark Frithjof sailed away leaving them to the long silence, the cold, the polar twilight which was soon to fade into the blackness of the Arctic night.

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It was a period of hardship, of narrow escapes from death, of fighting the vast cold solitude which "may warp, freeze, and solidify the spirit, or may set it free." But there were compensations—"the full-moon floods, falling on a white world," the glory of the Aurora Borealis, and the peace—most of all the perfect peace.

Finally the light returned, and one morning, late in the spring, the Frithjof was sighted around the headland. Another summer of work, and in September of that year Wellman at last was ready. Riesenberg went along as navigator and Melvin Vaniman as engineer. Their six-cylinder engine could make only fifteen miles an hour, and as they began to buck the forty-five-mile head wind from the Pole, the little craft gave up the ghost. They came down on Foul Glacier, not more than a hundred yards from a giant crevasse which could have swallowed a hundred balloons the size of theirs. They had been in the air four and a half hours. Captain Riesenberg's habit of not dramatizing his adventures gives them an air of authenticity, just as his lack of emphasis on humorous episodes makes them doubly effective.

"Living Again" covers fifty-seven years crowded with experience. It ranges from Minneapolis to Hongkong, from Marconi to Joan Lowell. There is a terseness in its style which suggests a ship's log, and a philosophy which comes only to one who has thought long thoughts in many night watches, to one who is essentially a man of the sea.

HUGO VAN ARX

Ireland and the "Trouble"

ARMY WITHOUT BANNERS. By Ernie O'Malley. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.

ON EASTER Monday, 1916, Ernie O'Malley, a medical student at Trinity College, Dublin, saw a tricolored flag floating over the General Post Office in O'Connell Street. A few weeks later he shared the use of a German Mauser with a friend, both boys taking turns at firing the heavy rifle at the military police. He had become an Irish volunteer through the same impulse that had aroused hundreds of other Dubliners to action: "to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to the people of Ireland." The execution of the leaders of the Irish Republic—Connolly, Pearse, MacDonagh, Plunkett—had dramatized the British threat of armed intervention, and almost overnight the citizens of Dublin found themselves at war with the British Empire. The events that Ernie O'Malley describes are not unfamiliar to readers of Shaw Desmond's "Drama of Sinn Fein," and the fog, rain, and machine-gun fire through which O'Malley rode his bicycle are easily visualized by those who have seen "The Plough and the Stars" or the movie version of "The Informer." Yet the history of what is now politely called the "trouble" in Ireland remains unclear. British censorship has done its work too well, and Irish love of melodrama shares the honor of obscuring the facts of those five years in which O'Malley grew to young manhood and earned a captaincy in the Irish Republican Army.

Meanwhile O'Malley's book should not be confused with the kind of entertainment offered by middle-aged army officers who enjoy the memory of an active youth each incident of which reflects the glory of its hero. Nor should this book be substituted for a history of the Sinn Fein movement, which was to translate its hopes and theories into memorable action. O'Malley is careful to say that he is not responsible for exact dates and generalized conclusions; in this book at least he has

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no intention of competing with the historians. The merits of O'Malley's "Army Without Banners" are peculiar to the kind of personal history that disowns individual heroism in favor of a common cause and common experience. He writes in his introduction: "We who fought effected a small part of the energy induced, and our individual efforts as personalities were subordinated to the impersonality of the movement and not impaired by it." And like the good writer that O'Malley reveals himself to be, he proves his case by making his story far more intelligent and graphic than any recent effort to record unique adventure through a period of civil warfare. The reader sees him as one of many drilling with broomsticks at night in a drafty hall and later as a young man in an ill-fitting trench coat organizing scattered units of the I. R. A. throughout Tipperary, Clare, Cork, Limerick, and Kilkenny. Even his memories of riding a lampless bicycle down lonely roads at evening are made to seem the experience of all who shared his duties and responsibilities.

When at last he was captured and imprisoned in Kilmainham gaol, he convinced those who questioned him that his name was Stewart and that as far as he knew there were no officers in the Irish Republican Army. His identification with the cause for which he fought was so complete that he welcomed anonymity and furthered it to protect himself against betrayal. In writing "Army Without Banners" it is significant that he has used the anonymous songs of the period to illustrate his memoirs as though he were again supplying evidence that his identity was wholly one with the will of his people.

This kind of self-effacement often implies self-discipline and is of the same order that sustains the morale of any group against superior numbers and overwhelming military advantage. It was evident in our own Revolutionary War as it was during the "trouble" that defeated the Black-and-Tans, and even today the Loyalist forces in Spain exhibit the same strength against fascist invasion. But what happened in Ireland after 1921 is another matter, and it is perhaps a consciousness of this difference that prompted Ernie O'Malley to close his narrative with the signing of a treaty announcing the birth of the Irish Free State.

HORACE GREGORY

New Novels

YOUNG ROBERT. By George Albee. Reynal and Hitchcock. $2.50.

YOUNG Robert is the grandson of an Irish immigrant who pioneered his way through the West, ending up in California, and living the bountiful, reckless pioneer life. Robert's father and his uncles and aunts were still pioneers, strong, eloquent, gigantic in stature and aptitude, named for Irish heroes and queens and wearing these names fitly: Conor, Dana, Sheen, Dermott, Angus, Fand, Flann, Gilveen. But the pioneer generation wears itself out in time; and the mind comes in to confuse and weaken heroes. Robert, who was growing up in San Francisco about the time of the earthquake and fire, was not a simple strong man like his Uncle Dermott or a simple orator like his Uncle Dana, or even a simple revolutionary like his labor-leader father. Robert got himself mixed up with education and the mechanical complications of the twentieth century. And the result was fatal. Very likely Mr. Albee knew he was symbolizing all the weakness of our own time and all the strength of the time of our fathers in his story of the Limewright family. But whether

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he knew it or not, he has writen an admirable novel, lively, thoughtful, lavish with epithet and metaphor, rich with incident, and implicit with wisdom.

THE GODS ARRIVE. By Grant Lewi. J. B. Lippincott Company. $2.50.

History makes itself and time makes subjects for fiction. We are now at the stage in time when the wild, gin-drinking twenties are sufficiently a part of the past to be isolated and put into novels. Mr. Lewi deftly details the brassy young girls in short skirts, the irresponsible young men who wanted to be artists, the easy money, the forgotten traditions, the calm acceptance of dirt, and the impatience with order. But when his hero, one of the would-be artists, has returned to his wife and begins to pull himself up by his bootstraps, Mr. Lewi turns moralist and didactically lays down a solution for a mad world—of all things, back to the land! In other words, he has written what promised to be a clever novel of manners and turned into a tract, not very clearly thought out.

ALL GOOD AMERICANS. By Jerome Bahr. With an Introduction by Ernest Hemingway. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

Fourteen short stories about a Middle Western small town, peopled with Polish or German Americans. Mr. Hemingway aptly says that the country and the people are reminiscent of Pieter Breughel. Mr. Bahr describes them in a one-syllable style that is occasionally reminiscent of Mr. Hemingway. But the stories have vitality, color, and humor; they are freshly and directly told; and a note of irony now and then makes them more than merely readable.

SMIRE. By Branch Cabell. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

It is difficult for one who is not among Mr. Cabell's warmer admirers to be properly appreciative of "Smire," which is the third in the trilogy which began with "Smith" and "Smirt." Perhaps it will be sufficient to say that Mr. Cabell's manner has not changed an iota and neither, really, has his matter. If you like it, you like it.

CAROLINE SMITH

RECORDS

SOME of the Decca records now offered at 50 and 75 cents are decidedly worth getting. They are repressings from European masters, and as such they fall into two groups. On the one hand there are English Decca recordings, which were made recently and have the clarity and fidelity that this fact implies. Outstanding among these is the set of Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas" (seven records, 75 cents each), which was originally issued by subscription. The music is beautiful; it is well performed by people most of whose names will be unfamiliar to you: Nancy Evans, Mary Hamlin, Roy Henderson, among other singers, Charles Kennedy Scott's A Cappella Singers, the Boyd Neel String Orchestra, Bernhard Ord at the harpsichord, all under the direction of Clarence Raybould; and it is well recorded, except that one cannot distinguish the words. This makes it important to have the text, which did not accompany my records.

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Take as one example the coming articles by McAllister Coleman which sketch the political career of New Jersey's reactionary Governor Hoffman. In these articles Mr. Coleman shows very clearly the governor's contempt for small consumers, the unemployed, and the organized labor movement and calls attention to the forces which are now combining against him and his corporate supporters.

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On the other hand there are the Odéon and Parlophone recordings, which are old, but some of which are worth having nevertheless. I would say this of a number of records of excerpts from Mozart's operas that I have listened to. It is the orchestra that suffers in the recording of eight or nine years ago (but it suffers initially from the ubiquitous Dr. Weissman's conducting); the voice is reproduced excellently; and these Mozart records offer some superb voices. Thus, in Leporelo's Catalogue Aria from "Don Giovanni," Papageno's two arias from "The Magic Flute," and "Se vuol ballare" and "Non più andrai" from "The Marriage of Figaro," the singing of Gerhard Hüsch is heard in all its beauty of timbre, its perfection of phrasing, its spirit and dramatic point. Nor does Hüsch provide the only examples. I recommend from "Don Giovanni" the recitative "Don Ottavio, son morta" and the aria "Or, sai chi l'onore," sung by Margarete Bäumer; and "Dalla sua pace" and "Il mio tesoro," sung by Max Hirzel. And from "The Marriage of Figaro" Cherubino's arias "Non so più cosa son" and "Voi che sapete," sung by Luise Helletsgruber with a fresher voice than she reveals in the recent Mozart Society set; and "Porgi amor," in which Elisabeth Rethberg's voice, too, is lovelier than it is today. All these, I must add, are sung in German; and I must also add that they are, like Columbia records, afflicted with the residue that must be removed from the grooves by repeated playing.

There is a record of the Quintet from "Die Meistersinger" which is worth having for the beautiful voice of Emmy Bettendorf (on the reverse side she is heard in the conclusion of the bridal-chamber scene of "Lohengrin," in which you may hear the bloom that Melchior's voice has lost with the years). And she sings the exquisite passage "Geliebter, spare den Zorn," which is on the first of four sides that give most of the scene of Sachs's cobbling song and Beckmesser's Serenade in Act II of "Die Meistersinger." The other singers include Michael Bohnen and Leo (not Gustav) Schützendorf. Unfortunately the recording gets quite bad in Beckmesser's Serenade; but there are no other records of this wonderful scene.

In an emergency I listened to the following single Victor records on a machine of a few years back (Victor E-135), using a cactus needle. This machine failed to reproduce the bass that I am sure is present in what sounds like a superb recording of the usual three excerpts from Berlioz's "Damnation of Faust." The music was written for just the marvelously colored and sensitized playing which the Boston Symphony does under Koussevitzky (two records, $4). On another single ($2) is exquisite singing by Elisabeth Schumann of Strauss's "Traum durch die Dämmerung" and "Ich schweibe" and Schumann's "Mondnacht." On still another ($2) is a beautiful performance by Wilhelm Bachaus, excellently recorded, of Brahms's Variations on an Original Theme. And on another ($1.50) are two songs of Sibelius sung by Eva Leoni: "The Dragon Fly," Opus 17, No. 5, and "Aus banger Brust," Opus 50, No. 4. I care neither for the songs nor for the singing. Nor do I find anything of interest in two compositions, "Andalucia" and "Arabia," by the guitarist Oyanguren, which he plays on another single ($1). There are fine performances by Yehudi Menuhin of Paganini's Caprice in E, Opus 1, No. 9, and the one in G minor, Opus 1, No. 6, to which Enesco has fitted a piano acompaniment ($2). And finally, a record ($2) which you may neglect: the "Che farò" from Gluck's "Orfeo" and the "Ombra mai fù" from Händel's "Xerxes," sung by Enid Szantho.

B. H. HAGGIN

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Letters to the Editors

European Trials

Dear Sirs: The editorial Behind the Soviet Trials in *The Nation* of February 6 states that Soviet judicial procedure is patterned more on that of the Continental European countries than on the Anglo-American, and that in Continental Europe the evidence taken down during the preliminary inquiry is secret.

If by Continental European countries the writer means Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany, he may maintain that their judicial procedure is to a certain extent analogous to that of Soviet Russia. In Italy political opponents of the government are tried by a special tribunal consisting of officers of the Fascist militia, and the whole procedure depends on the discretion of the president of the tribunal. Sometimes the newspapers are commanded to publish documents and other evidence collected during the preliminary inquiry. Until the middle of 1935 they were as a rule allowed to give no more than the names of the defendants and the sentences inflicted upon them. Now even this information has been suppressed. In Germany Hitler can even "purge out" his political opponents without any trial at all—which is perhaps a fairer and more humane method of getting rid of them than the Soviet method, according to which they are brought on the stage to vilify themselves by abject "confessions." But if by Continental European countries are meant those which are still endowed with free government, and Italy and Germany before they were blessed with Mussolini and Hitler, then the statement in question is wholly out of place.

In France the evidence collected during the preliminary inquiry is so far from being secret that the counsel for the defense attends the whole procedure, and the papers can give information about it from day to day. In Italy before 1927 the records of the preliminary inquiry were put at the disposal not only of the counsel for the defense but also of the press. No document or other evidence collected during the preliminary inquiry was of any use during the public trial unless it was read out. The material gathered during the preliminary inquiry served to help the judges and barristers in cross-examining the defendant and witnesses, not to make the public inquiry unnecessary. "Confessions" were not regarded as sufficient evidence but had to be supported with independent proofs.

If judicial procedure in the free countries of Continental Europe as well as in the dictatorial countries were similar to that of Soviet Russia, this still would not mean that Soviet procedure is good. It would mean that not only the dictatorial but also the free countries of Europe should take lessons from Anglo-American procedure. As a matter of fact, in this field the free European countries have little to learn from the Anglo-Saxons, and Stalin must be content with the companionship of Hitler and Mussolini.

GAETANO SALVEMINI

Cambridge, Mass., March. 16

Spirit of Spain

[*The appended letter from Madrid has been sent to us by a subscriber.*]

Dear ——: Across the highway leading from France to La Junquera there is a poster: "Spain and Catalonia greet all friends of freedom and justice." You pass under it, and then you find yourself in a new world. Not a land of skyscrapers and chlorotic wage slaves of Manhattan beyond the Statue of Liberty, but a land in the throes of revolution and human joy, that goes to your head like wine. You fall in love with Spaniards at once. They are friendly, thoughtful, and infinitely kind, and yet retain their dignity. They are physically attractive. The militia, dressed in a motley array of rags, move silently and gracefully, like cats. If Barcelona and Catalonia are exciting, Madrid confronts you with a note of passionate intensity. Even in Valencia there is a certain amount of gaiety left. The cafes and cabarets are crowded; you see quite a number of well dressed men and women. Madrid is entirely different. There are crowds of people, but they are gray. Appearances are neglected. Few men bother to shave. They say that shaving is a disgrace, because it shows that you have time for yourself. The cafes are open, and the trams seem to run on schedule. But every thing closes at seven in the evening, and after that Madrid is dead, except for the boom of cannon and the occasional rattle of machine-guns. There is a determined atmosphere about Madrid, and practically everybody is confident that it cannot be taken by the enemy. On the other hand the majority of the population expect things to get worse in the future, particularly the food question. I am convinced that whatever hardships may face us here, the surrender of Madrid is unthinkable.

It is impossible of course to explain all that Spain is at the moment, and all it stands for, and it is difficult to pick out really relevant facts. I would like, however, to tell you about two things I have seen, because they impressed me most. All over Spain along the roadside one sees wrecked and abandoned cars, smashed in the first few weeks of the revolution by their enthusiastic but incompetent drivers. The revolution destroys. In Madrid I saw a place where they collect these wrecked cars, build bodies for them, lengthen the driving shafts, and make ambulances out of them. They started two months ago, workers themselves, and out of nothing they have created a unique and wonderful plant. They are turning out fifty ambulances each month now, and this is only the beginning. The workers who took us round the place were the proudest men on earth, and they made us proud too. Proud of taking part in their war, which is our war also, and of having them as our comrades. The factory is near the front, but through shelling and bombardment the work goes on.

And then there was the blood-transfusion service, organized by Dr. Bethune of the Canadian unit. They are getting blood from donors in Barcelona, typing and testing it, and then sending it to all Spanish fronts. It is a marvel of scientific and technical organization. Ten minutes after they are rung up, the patient at the front is getting a blood transfusion. I wouldn't have believed it possible had I not seen it with my own eyes.

It is true that the revolution destroys, but it creates in the same step. In the same way it makes and destroys its enemies, but what wonderful friends it makes! The feeling of equality and human dignity is all permeating and shines through the dirty and unshaven faces of its soldiers, through the mud of the unhappy countryside, through the shellholes in the houses. We who are marching in its wake say: Long live the revolution!

R. A.

Madrid, February 6

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Sean O'Faolain

Dear Sirs: Some weeks ago you printed a letter from John O'Hara Harte in which he stated that at the time of his leaving Ireland Sean O'Faolain was under arrest there, and that possibly he was still in prison on January 6, the date of the letter. Having already heard a rumor to the same effect I wrote Mr. O'Faolain, who now replies in part as follows:

I was not arrested, however. A young Trinity College man chose, for some odd reason, to give my name, and you would be surprised at the number of people who have met me in the street and, unlike yourself, said with bitter disappointment, "I thought you were in jail!" I think those days are over for me. The only thing I am likely to be jailed for now is for writing an unpopular book or for protesting against the banning of some good one.

B. W. HUEBSCH

New York, March 11

Bright Idea

Dear Sirs: Writers have been our despair for years. Constituting a group which should be the first to accept modern ideas, they have in fact lagged far behind teamsters and longshoremen. At last, however, there are signs of the times among them. Pressed on, perhaps, by the sharp necessity of paying mounting grocery bills—according to the figures of the Authors' Guild the average income of a writer is $2,500 in good times, with zero the limit in bad—some sixteen hundred authors of all literary crafts and calibers have formed a standard trade union, the American Writers' Union, which already has locals in twenty-three cities.

The first tear bomb in their attack, designed to cause considerable weeping in the magazine offices, is an arrangement, known as the free-presentation plan, to submit manuscripts-in-multiple to publishers. For thirty years editors have enforced an unmentioned but none the less merciless boycott against the author who dared to submit his work to more than one of them at a time. Their reason for so doing is excellent: if a writer receives competitive bids for his product he is liable to get a fair price for it. It is quite illegal, since it flouts the federal statute dealing with restraint in trade, to set up such a boycott; hence it is done *sub rosa*. But writers throughout the country will be polled by the union by the thousand, and if their vote for the projected free-presentation plan is as overwhelming as it in all probability will be, editors will soon be receiving manuscripts labeled, "Submitted under the free-presentation plan of the American Writers' Union." And editors discriminating against the craftsman who sends in such a manuscript will find themselves in hot literary waters.

GEORGE ALBEE

New York, March 23

CONTRIBUTORS

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD, who as editor of *The Nation* made one of his most persistent and courageous journalistic campaigns in behalf of the rights of the people of the West Indies, recently returned from a trip to the islands.

MAXWELL S. STEWART has just spent several days on the Nebraska front of the country-wide campaign for cheap power and the conservation of natural resources. There as elsewhere the Supreme Court and the vested interests are the villains in the piece.

ROBERT DELL, whose dispatches from Paris and Geneva have appeared for many years in the Manchester *Guardian* and *The Nation*, is one of the most distinguished of foreign correspondents. His long experience and wide knowledge of European affairs make his comment at this critical period doubly valuable.

AGNES SMEDLEY has been active in the radical movement in China for ten years; with Mme Sun Yat-sen she founded the Chinese League for Civil Rights. She is the author of "China's Red Army Marches" and of several other books on China.

MAXWELL GEISMAR, who has frequently contributed reviews to *The Nation*, is on a year's leave of absence from the English department of Sarah Lawrence College.

PHILIP RAHV is one of the editors of the *Partisan Review and Anvil*, a radical literary journal.

HORACE GREGORY, poet and literary critic, will shortly publish a study of the traditions behind modern literature entitled "Makers and Ancestors."

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